



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

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04/26

Growing More Christlike Together

West Los Angeles UMC is a Reconciling Congregation and welcomes all persons regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

West LA Connections™

West Los Angeles United Methodist Church Monthly Newsletter | APRIL Issue



APRIL
2026

SENIOR PASTOR'S REFLECTION

Grace and peace, friends in Christ.

He is risen! By the time you receive this note, we will be journeying through the endings of the Lenten season, into Holy Week. For my pastoral note this month, I'd like to offer up this poem by Jan Richardson, which we read together in worship on March 15.

"And The Table Will Be Wide" from How the Stars Get in Your Bones, A Book of Blessings by Jan Richardson:

"And the table will be wide.
And the welcome will be wide.
And the arms will open wide to gather us in.
And our hearts will open wide to receive.

And we will come as children who trust there is enough.
And we will come unhindered and free.
And our aching will be met with bread.
And our sorrow will be met with wine.

And we will open our hands to the feast without shame.
And we will turn toward each other without fear.

And we will give up our appetite for despair.
And we will taste and know of delight.

And we will become bread
For a hungering world.
And we will become drink
For those who thirst.
And the blessed
Will become the blessing.
And everywhere will be the feast."

Throughout the season of Lent, we have reflected on our lives in the wilderness. We have taken time to evaluate where we are, who we are, and where God might be calling to us. Many have taken up a time of fasting, of saying "no" to things in our lives that do not serve us.

Now, as we approach Easter, we get to remember the God of the Feast. We get to remember the God of our Joy and the God of Hope. The God we worship is not a God who leaves us empty, but a God who invites us to the table. The God we worship is not a God who leaves us in the grief and despair of Good Friday, but a God who brings us to new life on Sunday.

If Easter is about anything, it is about this God who brings each of us back to life.

Below I have some questions for reflection and a guide to prayer. I hope and pray it provides space for you to reflect as we begin this new season of Easter.

Pause, Pray, Reflect: A Guide Into Easter Season

Pause for a moment and let yourself breathe. Release any tension you may be holding in your shoulders. As you breathe out, imagine yourself breathing out any lingering stressors or concerns.

In the past 40 days of Lent, where have you felt God's Spirit stirring in your life? God's Spirit might have looked like a sense of peace, creativity, passion, deep emotion, or even grief, anger, etc. If you can, take some time to write down what comes to mind. There are no wrong answers.

What comes to mind for you when you think about Easter? Do you resonate at all with the Easter Story? If you need a reminder, you can read John 17-24.

If you can, take some time to write down what comes to mind. There are no wrong answers.

Easter is our reminder that God's life and light prevail over the worst of the world's violence, chaos, and darkness. Are there places in your life that you need God's life and light? If you can, take some time to write down what comes to mind. There are no wrong answers.

Meditation Prayer:

Breathe in: God of Life,
Breathe out: show me the way to life.

Breathe in: God of Life,
Breathe out: bring me back to life.

Breathe in and out, saying these prayers, as many times as you need.

Praying with and beside you.

Blessings to you as we enter Eastertide,

- Pastor Kiana Nicholson, 3.10.26

NICHIGO MINISTRY: PASTOR'S NOTE FROM REV. BECKY

「復活祭の恵み」

復活祭おめでとうございます！今年の復活祭は4月5日。十字架で殺されたイエス様が3日目に復活した記念日です。キリスト教では最も大事なお祭りで、基本的に「春分の日後の最初の満月の次の日曜日」に祝われる移動祝日。初代教会では、ユダヤ教の過越しの祭り「ニサンの月の14日」と同じ日に祝われていたと考えられています。多くの教会では、「ニサンの月の14日後の最初の日曜日」に祝う習慣でした。2000年以上の歴史ある主の復活のお祭りが今も続き、私たちは喜びをもって今年も復活された主を礼拝します。

「キリストは死んで、また生き返った！」復活の話を疑わず信じる事が大事。

主の十字架の死を悲しむ女性たちは、お墓に行ってみると、そこに主の体がありません。その時、天使が主の蘇りを告げました。(ルカ24章)女性たちの悲しみは喜びに変えられました。復活を信じたからです。

それから、2000年、一人一人、主に出会う時が与えられています。話しをしていた時は気付かなかったのに、何かのきっかけで目が開かれたり、分かるようになったりと、奇蹟が続きます。復活のイエス様が、一緒に歩いてくれるお方であることを深く知り、弟子達は変えられ、キリスト者として喜びに満ち伝道していきます。だから、私たちは今もアメリカの地で日本語伝道をします。ハンドベル、聖歌隊、食事会、と主の復活を喜びたいと思います。心に主の霊が豊かに注がれますように！

Happy Easter! This year, Easter falls on April 5th. We commemorate the resurrection of Jesus Christ three days after His crucifixion. It is the most important Christian holiday, typically celebrated on the Sunday following the first full moon after the vernal equinox. In the early Church, Easter was believed to have been celebrated on the same day as the Jewish Passover, on the 14th day of Nisan (Nisan is the first month of the Biblical Hebrew calendar). Many churches traditionally celebrate Easter on the first Sunday after the 14th day of Nisan. This celebration of the Lord's Resurrection, which has a history of over 2,000 years, continues today, and we joyfully worship the risen Lord again this year.

"Christ died and rose again!" It is important to believe the story of the resurrection without doubt. Women grieving over Jesus' crucifixion went to His tomb only to find His body missing. An angel then announced His resurrection (Luke 24). Their grief was transformed into joy because they believed in the resurrection.

Since then, 2,000 years have passed, and each of us has been given the opportunity to encounter the Lord. Miracles continue to happen, although, we don't realize it when we are talking about Jesus. But, something opens our eyes and we begin to understand Jesus as the Savior. The disciples were transformed by coming to a deeper understanding that the resurrected Jesus was walking alongside them, and they learned to evangelize joyfully to share about Jesus. If you doubt a little or much about God's miracle, come and worship with us. We will experience the presence of living God together with praise and worship, and food fellowship!

- 平田

Café Aloha Senior Bento Delivery on April 4th (Saturday)

Café Aloha ministry would like to reach out to seniors 70 and older by delivering Easter bento. If you are interested in receiving bento, please contact Church office.

4月4日(土) イースター弁当

教会では復活祭を覚えてシニアのメンバーにお弁当を届けます。ご希望の方は教会オフィスまでご連絡ください。

メニュー: サンドイッチ、スープ、菓子、フルーツ
Menu: Sandwich, Soup, Kashi, Fruits

CAFE ALOHA 2026

WEST LA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
SENIOR BENTO

JANUARY 10 - IN PERSON
FEBRUARY 7 - DELIVERY
MARCH 7 - IN PERSON
APRIL 4 - DELIVERY
MAY 2 - DELIVERY
JUNE 6 - IN PERSON



GETTING READY FOR HOLY WEEK!

Here's how you can participate:

JOIN US FOR PALM SUNDAY AND GOOD FRIDAY SERVICES:

Our Palm and Passion Sunday on March 29, 2026 begins our journey into Holy Week. Our service times are 9:30AM for English Language, and 11AM for Japanese Language. Then, on Friday, we invite all church and community members to join us in worship at our Good Friday service, at 7:30PM on Friday, April 3rd. Our Good Friday service will be a tenebrae service of candles, scripture, prayer, music, and reflection. We look forward to worshipping with you.

JOIN US FOR EASTER SUNDAY:

Our Easter Sunday services will be at 9:30AM (English Language) and 11AM (Japanese Language). Join us as we celebrate the risen Christ with joyful music, praise, and fellowship!



All are Welcome for Holy Week Services

<i>Palm Sunday</i>	<i>Good Friday</i>
March 29	April 3
9:30 am (English) 11:00 am 日本語 (Japanese)	7:30 pm (English)

Easter Sunday

April 5

9:30 am (English)
11:00 am 日本語 (Japanese)

More Info: www.wlaumc.com

HOLY WEEK HELP NEEDED!

FLOWERS FOR EASTER SUNDAY'S FLOWERING OF THE CROSS

In many churches such as ours, the tradition of making a floral cross with the generous donations of flowers from the congregation is very much needed and appreciated. This year we hope to have enough to fill the wire cross abundantly so that it might be displayed in the sanctuary during worship. Please bring your flowers early to church on Easter morning, Sunday April 5, before worship where folks will help fill the wire cross. Be sure to leave at least 6 inches of stem or more so that the flowers will stay fixed in the wire cross without falling out.

EASTER LILIES FOR ALTAR AREA - TAKE HOME AFTER WORSHIP!

Like our poinsettias that adorn our sanctuary at Advent and Christmas, so we hope to adorn the sanctuary altar in the same way except with beautiful Easter Lilies on Easter morning! Easter lily order forms and a payment of \$12 are due on March 29th. The lilies will adorn our sanctuary on Easter Sunday. Please take them home with you after the service!



GOD'S GARDEN - A CALL FOR STAFF & VOLUNTEERS!

God's Garden is looking for support for our children's and youth ministry in a few different areas. How might you support these important church ministries for your young people?

Paid Part-Time Position:

It has been difficult to have programs, like the Easter Picnic among others, for the children and youth without this position filled. Please help us in getting the word out. The church is looking to hire a new Leader of Youth and Children's Ministry. We are looking for someone who will envision and organize our various children's ministry programs, youth programs, conduct administrative duties, and engage the families in the life of the church. If you have any ideas for a person who could be right for this part-time job, please contact Sonia Dixon (SPRC), Susanne Nagata (God's Garden) or Pastor Kiana.

Adult Support on Sundays:

The Youth and God's Garden are also looking for adult support during Sunday Worship Service time. We are looking for volunteers who would:

- Support our littlest members (infants and toddlers) in the Nursery
- Teach a class or support the teachers
- Volunteer to guide our growing youth group
- Give a Children's Message

****If you want to be involved in or have ideas for any of the above opportunities, find Susanne for a chat, or email her at susanne.nagata@gmail.com**

REFRESHMENTS

**Upcoming refreshment dates:
May 3, Sept 27, Nov 15**

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the refreshments. We hope your children enjoyed serving the congregation by being a part of fellowship time. Our next day to bring in goodies will be the first week of May. We will send out the sign up sheet, but feel free to add something even if you don't sign up. We had quite the spread last time!

CELEBRATING GIRLS DAY!

We had a wonderful time getting dressed up in beautiful kimonos. With the help of Kristen Sakaguchi, her mother Mari Takahashi, Keiko Kikuta, and Keiko Kano, we dressed the girls (and even one adult!) for the occasion. Many people contributed to celebrate and wish our girls health, happiness, prosperity, and growth in knowing God.



UPCOMING EVENTS

~~** (CANCELLED) EASTER PICNIC: SAT.~~

~~4/4~~

**CHILDREN'S DAY FESTIVAL AT THE
BUDDHIST TEMPLE: MAY 2**

**KID'S CAMP: 6/28, 7/5 (NO CAMP), 7/12,
7/19, 7/26, 8/2 (SERVICE)**

**ASIAN AMERICAN SUMMER CAMP (6TH-
12TH GRADES): 6/28 - 7/3**

Social & Environmental Justice and Missions

Looking for ways to get involved and make a difference in your community? Check out our SEJM calendar of Upcoming activities!

Sun., April 19: SEJM Meeting, 11:15 am
 Sun., April 26: Earth Day Worship & More, 9:30 am
 Sun., May 17: SEJM Team Meeting, 11:15 am
 Sat., May 30, Habitat for Humanity Build
 (See Page 11 for more info)

Reconciling Ministries Updates!

On February 21st, West LA UMC joined with 80+ friends from the Asian Pacific Rainbow Coalition (ARC) to march in the Golden Dragon Parade in Chinatown. Together with 100,000 spectators, we welcomed the Year of the Fire Horse with Pride – again as the only faith community carrying a banner!



UPCOMING MONTHLY EVENTS:

- Breakfast Bunch at Marie Callender's on 4/2
- Grief Support Group (lunch provided) on 4/16
- Senior Fun Day (lunch provided) on 4/24

Please RSVP to Pastor Kiana or the Church office if you are planning to join Grief Support or Senior Fun Day!

SAVE THE DATE: Pride Activities!



Sunday, May 31, 9:30 am
West LA UMC
Pride Worship Service

Saturday, June 6, 1-3 pm
"Okaeri Voices: Family & Faith"
 Screening & Discussion at Faith UMC
 Co-Sponsored by
 Okaeri and Faith, Centenary & West LA UMCs



Join us on Sunday, May 31st at 9:30 am for our annual Pride Worship Service and refreshments afterwards. On Saturday, June 6, 1:00 to 3:00 pm, Okaeri and our Reconciling Tri-Church team (Centenary, Faith & West LA) will be co-hosting a special screening of "Okaeri Voices," featuring the Murakami family discussing their journey. This gathering and discussion will be held at Faith UMC in Torrance. Carpooling available. RSVP to Jeri at jotwlaumc@gmail.com.

APRIL UPCOMING EVENTS

2 **Breakfast Bunch**
 Thursday, April 2 | 8AM
 at Marie Callender's on National Blvd

16 **Grief Support Group**
 Thursday, April 16 | 11:30AM

24 **Senior Fun Day**
 Friday, April 24 | 10:30AM

UPCOMING OHANASHI WRITING WORKSHOPS!

“Ohanashi” means story or tale in Japanese, including those passed down through generations.. **In anticipation of our church’s 100th Anniversary in May 2030, we are gathering recipes and stories related to our long and delicious history.** Do you have a favorite memory of your time at church as a child or a milestone moment? What is your personal story of faith? What comes to mind when you smell sugar & shoyu? There is much to explore!

To facilitate story sharing and capturing narratives in writing, I am coordinating workshops where we will write to prompts and encourage creativity. **No writing experience is necessary!** We are setting workshop dates according to interest and availability to gather in-person and/or via Zoom. If you would like to participate in a future workshop, please contact Jeri at jotwlaumc@gmail.com or sign-up at church after worship.

West Los Angeles United Methodist Church

“Ohanashi”
Writing Workshop Series

If You are Interested
in Participating -
Contact
Deaconess Jeri
at jotwlaumc@gmail.com

Family Recipes

Your Personal History

Family Stories

Church History

WEST LA UMC

Join Us For Our

ALL CHURCH CLEAN UP

Saturday, April 18th at 9AM

Lunch provided!



ALL CHURCH CLEAN UP DAY!

ATTENTION ALL CHURCH MEMBERS! It’s time for our All Church Clean Up! Join us on **Saturday, April 18th at 9AM** as we spring clean, sort, and organize our church items — deciding what to keep, discard, or set aside to donate at our Antique Sale in May.

It has been several years since our last clean up, and now is the moment to come together and take care of our church home. We need everyone’s participation to make this a success!

ACTION REQUIRED — Before Sunday, April 12th: All Ministry Leaders and Members who have items stored at the church must label all ministry items and personal belongings by Sunday, April 12th. Ministry Leaders (or their representatives) are also asked to attend a walk-through with the Cleaning Committee and Board of Trustees on Sunday, April 12th at 11:30AM.

ALL Church Clean Up Committee:
Jared Aoki, Rev Becky Hirata, Toshio & Keiko Takahashi,
Susanne Nagata, Shawna Cullinan, and Pastor Kiana Nicholson

KEY DATES:
APRIL 12th: Inventory Walk-Thru (ministry leaders)
APRIL 18th: All Church Cleanup (everyone)

Saturday, May 9th, 9am-2pm



**West LA United Methodist Church
1913 Purdue Ave, Los Angeles, CA
(310) 479-1379**

**2026 All Church Antique Store, Yard,
Bake & Plant Sale**

**Saturday, May 9, 9am - 2pm
(the day before Mother's Day)**

Donations: Sunday - Wednesday, May 3-6

Preview Sale for our Church Community: Friday,
May 8, 4-6pm

Bake Sale donations: Saturday, May 9 before 9am
Public Sale Day: Saturday, May 9

Please Join the Fun - Volunteer!

Contact Kay Yang @ knyang1016@gmail.com, or call
the church at (310) 479-1379.

Contribute to the Bake Sale!

Share your favorite home-made creations! Please
pre-package for sale: Cookies, mochi, sweet
breads, cakes, furikake chex/senbei mix, rice
krispie treats, etc. NON refrigeration-required foods
only, please! Please note if your food contains nuts.

Please start gathering items to donate:

- High value antiques & collectibles
- Luxury Brands - Gucci, Louis Vuitton, Chanel, Coach, Dooney & Bourke, Tori Burch, etc
- Japanese household items - dishes, bowls, vases, serveware, lacquerware, decorative boxes
- Kimono/obi & yukata, fabrics
- Unopened gifts - wedding, anniversary, birthday, housewarming, omiyage
- Barware - vintage cocktail & water glasses
- Kitchen & housewares - appliances, cooking & baking, utensils, restaurant supplies
- Jewelry - costume & fine jewelry
- Precious metals - gold, silver, platinum in any form, eg old tooth fillings, coins
- Purses & handbags - new & old, Designer & hand-made
- Modern consumer Electronics - earbuds & headsets, bluetooth speakers, etc
- Women's vintage & Designer clothing (NO shoes)
- Dodgers, Lakers, Rams, Clippers, Chargers, Kings, Galaxy, LA Football Club, local sports team
official branded clothing
- Collectibles - trading cards, character & sports memorabilia
- Anything kawaii-cute
- Tools, hardware, garden
- Home & office - storage containers, organizers, small electronics
- Toys, games, sports equipment, camping, picnic
- Books - Kids and Cookbooks only
- Kids & Babies - toys, games, clothes
- All those knick-knacks & JUNQUE you just need to get rid of
- Curiosities - Surprise us! We love STRANGE

**Your 2026 Antique Store
Committee:**

**Elaine Sunoo, Jane Harada,
Kay Yang, Sonia Dixon, and
Steve Seto**

A MESSAGE FROM 580 Cafe Board of Directors

2025 reminded us why 580 Café exists. As challenges facing students intensified, our community responded with generosity, compassion, and presence. We are deeply grateful to the many community partners and supporters who made it possible for 580 to remain a steady place of refuge and care. Thanks to you we continue to ensure the 580 Café continues to embody the promise of Beloved Community.

The past year tested our campus community in profound ways. The need for food, toiletries, emergency assistance, counseling, and simple moments of rest has grown dramatically. As financial pressures, social unrest, and personal hardships intensified, more students continue to turn to 580 Café as their primary source of support & compassion.

Yet even in the face of rising challenges, we remain steadfast in our mission. Powered by your donations, in 2025, we supported our students with weekly meals, a reflection garden, community-based programs, and emergency grants. Together, we continue to create a space where students can exhale, be seen, and find strength for the road ahead. THANK YOU!

2025 IMPACT SNAPSHOT:

10,000+ Hot Meals Served

75+ Students Served Daily

105 Good Neighbor (Emergency Needs) Grants Awarded

25 Student Leadership Interns

Our students continue to find a deep sense of welcome and belonging through their participation in worship, ministry, and social activities at West L.A. UMC. We are truly grateful for the opportunity to not only attend but also help lead worship on a regular basis. As one student recently shared, "It's very friendly and grounding coming to worship here."

The kindness and generosity of West L.A. UMC extends well beyond Sunday mornings. We are deeply thankful for your steadfast support of our daily ministry through food donations, meaningful conversations, and financial contributions.

Thank you for providing our students with such a supportive community during these challenging times.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT, WEST LA UMC!

CICLA VIA
WEST LA

Sunday
April 26, 2026
9am-4pm

domingo
26 de abril 2026
9am-4pm

LEGEND / LEXICON
Route = 3 miles / Ruta = 3 millas
CICLA Via Route / Ruta de Cicla Via
Crossing Points for Cars / Puntos de cruce para coches
Activity Hub / Centro de actividad

STREET CLOSURE NOTIFICATION
Sunday, April 26, 2026

STREET CLOSED TO CARS CALLES CERRADAS A LOS COCHES	FROM DE	TO A	CLOSES* CERRADO*	OPENS** ABIERTO**
Santa Monica Blvd	Centinela Ave	Westwood Blvd	7am	6pm
Westwood Blvd	Santa Monica Blvd	Le Conte Ave	7am	6pm

Freeway ramp closures or restrictions in the area: 405 S/B and N/B on and off ramps for Santa Monica Blvd
Cierres o restricciones de rampas de autopistas en el área: Las rampas de entrada y salida de Santa Monica Blvd del 405

Terasaki Japanese Immersion Preschool

NOW ENROLLING!
Located at the Japanese Institute of Sawtelle, we welcome children ages 2-5. Our play-based environment immerses students in Japanese language and culture.
Hours: 9am-3pm (extended care 8am-6pm).
Join our multilingual community!
Contact: (310) 479-2477 or terasakipreschool@sawtellegakuin.org.

NJAUMC ASIAN CAMP 2026
June 28 - July 3
Camp Wrightwood
Wrightwood, CA

Camper Registration Now Available!
For more information and to register, please visit our website at the link below.
njaumccamps.org

Sawtelle Japantown Association Presents
Kodomo No Hi CHILDREN'S DAY CELEBRATION

1-4 PM
Saturday May 2, 2026

Save the Date!

- Free Games & Crafts
- Food Trucks*
- Live Music
- Cultural Demonstrations
- Hula, Taiko & More!

WLA Buddhist Temple
2003 Corinth Ave
Los Angeles, CA 90025
FREE Parking at Lumen

*Food trucks will be open starting from 12PM

If you are in need of spiritual/pastoral care and/or wish to be added to or removed from the Prayer List, please contact Deaconess Jeri Okamoto-Tanaka at jotwlaumc@gmail.com or call the Office at 310-479-1379.

Happy Earth Month!

Earth Day falls on April 22nd this year, and our Earth Day celebration at West LA United Methodist church will be **Sunday, April 26**. The global theme this year, set by EarthDay.org, is: **Our Power, Our Planet**.

What does this theme mean? This year we are invited to take back our power. While it is easy to become overwhelmed by frightening leadership choices and what our world faces today, Earth Day reminds us that the environment is not political, and not attached to an administration. The environment belongs to us.

The Earth Day manifesto for this years' theme begins: **At a moment of heightened uncertainty and environmental stress, one conclusion is clear and broadly shared: progress in protecting our land, air, and water is real, resilient, and ongoing.**

Our Power, Our Planet reflects a fundamental truth that transcends political cycles. Environmental stewardship has never depended on a single administration, institution, or election. It is sustained by the daily decisions of communities, educators, workers, innovators, and families who understand that protecting the places they live and work is both a responsibility and a long-term investment.

We can't wait to see you on the 26th! Happy Earth Day!

-Jamie Thierman

Habitat for Humanity Build Saturday, May 30th - Sign up Now!!

The Social and Environmental Justice Committee is sponsoring another build date with Habitat for Humanity in Long Beach on Saturday, May 30th, from 8am to 2pm. Come along and join the team in building new homes and using power tools (for a great cause).

Space is limited to twenty volunteers, so if you're interested, please sign up quickly by contacting Mark Holmes via email at mholmes64@yahoo.com, or text at 310-745-3698. Once you sign up, Mark will provide details on how to register with Habitat for the event, which is also required.



SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES

In-person Services
 9:30 AM—English Worship
 11:00 AM—Japanese Worship
 Online worship at 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

Rev. Kiana Nicholson
 Senior Pastor
kiana.h.nicholson1@gmail.com

Rev. Rebecca Hirata
 Japanese Language Pastor
Nichigo@wlaumc.com

Deaconess Jeri Okamoto-Tanaka
 Director of Spiritual Engagement &
 Compassion Care
jotwlaumc@gmail.com

Lynne Onishi
 Administrative Assistant
info@wlaumc.com
 310-479-1379