



United Methodist Church Westlake Village

Covenant

The mission of the Church is to make, mature and mobilize disciples of Christ for the transformation of the world.

Volume 2025, Issue 3

March 2025

PASTOR'S PONDERINGS:



Pastor Darren

I remember a few Lents ago I made my usual commitment, among other disciplines; giving up chocolate. Things went pretty well! I even lost a bit of weight. The next year I thought I'd do the same. Let's just say that not all Lents are the same. I can't remember what they were, but a couple of curveballs hit my life that year... and chocolate tasted better somehow. You know how it goes.

Many of us have walked the Lenten journey before. It's this season that starts with Ash Wednesday and goes through Good Friday, the Friday before Easter. It's a season for forgiveness and reconciliation with God, with others and with ourselves. It's also come to be a season for deepening faith for many of us. For the 40 days, not including Sundays, that lead up to Easter we're invited to consider foregoing something we've made integral to our lives that distracts us from the life that God would desire for us.

This isn't always easy. Sometimes this new commitment is something "simple" like chocolate. (We don't always understand the power something has over us until we try to give it up). Other

times it's something more substantial and potentially damaging to our lives and spirit.

In any case, the idea is to take the time, energy, and/or love we've had for this distraction and replace it with something more Godly focused. This is where the journey can get more fun! Is there some practice that is spiritually nourishing, which you've neglected? I've known people who find their time outdoors to be excellent "God time", but never go. Maybe your spirit longs for daily centering time, which it's not getting. Or maybe there's faith action you're called to? Has God put a justice issue on your heart? This is a great time to make that focus for a 6 week period.

Ultimately, the hope is that we land on Easter morning with some sense of 'new life' in our own lives. As we celebrate Jesus' resurrection, the significance can extend into our own lives. Where might you come to know redemption, reconciliation, or even resurrection in your own life? We dare to dream...

Grace and Peace,

The season of Lent begins with worship. Lent itself is a season of re-focusing ourselves on the Godly matters of life. We often do this by denying ourselves something that distracts us from those Godly matters and replacing it with something spiritually nourishing.

Ash Wednesday begins that season by reminding us of our humanity. We are prone to wonderful things. But we are also drawn to the less holy. By inviting God into our being we are strengthened to maintain our faith and focus. To remind us of our humanity we use ash to remember that we are only human; beloved children of God, but capable of falling short of God's desire for us. With God, we can be all that God hopes for us.

Our worship will be a reflective time to refocus on your life and faith. We hope to see you there to start the Lenten journey.

**Ash
Wednesday**

**Service at
UMCWV
March 5
7:00 P.M.**

Lent begins...



MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS

Vinia Pavlath For Carol Ames, Communications Coordinator



Ministry summit Feb 8 in Alton Hall

UMCWV' first Ministry Summit was held in Alton Hall on Saturday February 8 from 9 to noon. There were thirty participants. A big thank you to our Hospitality committee for providing a delicious beautifully presented breakfast for all of us to enjoy.

After breakfast we sang songs & Pastor Darren said a prayer to start the summit. Initially, everyone selected a seat but later we were asked to sit in ministry groups. Each group was asked to add their ministry events to the calendar for 2025. This was done to have an overview of the church "happenings" for this year. It was great to see how many activities are planned.

We closed with singing the Doxology, since we all know the words, and a closing prayer. The hope is to have the summit once a quarter and track our progress, changes or additions to UMCWV ministries! If you missed the Ministry Summit this time, hopefully you can attend the next one. It was a great time and an opportunity to connect with other ministry groups.



Candice Shehorn reading in the Grands who read at the Growing Place Preschool

Grands Who Read is a program at the Growing Place preschool where members of the church participate in story time in the classroom by reading to the children. You can bring a book you would like to read or the teacher can provide the book. The program is a half hour commitment once a month.



Saturday night Suppers in Alton Hall

Saturday Night Suppers was held in Alton Hall Feb 15. It was hosted by Jeanie Severance and Candi Wilcox. Musical entertainment was courtesy of by Tim & Nancy Bonds and Gloria Hilliard. It was a fun night of fellowship and great food. (Beautiful floral Center pieces done by Candi Wilcox.)

Children's Ministry Sunday mornings experience is fun and educational for kids of all ages from the little ones in the Kids Zone, the children's message in the service and crafts and service project in Sunday School for the bigger kids! Contact Charissa Birmingham if you are interested in helping with Children's Ministry!



Sunday School made crafts for Valentines Day



Kid Zone and Children's Time

UMCW Lenten Movie Screening & Studies



Lenten Theme for 2025!

Reserve your book for \$20
Movie Screening in Alton Hall
March 1, 5pm

Movie Snacks will be served
You can bring your own chair or
use one in Alton Hall



Lenten Studies!

- Sunday 3/9 at 8:30am with Steve Studies start Wed. 3/12 at 10am
(in person in the AH Rm 1 and zoom)
- Wed. 3/12 on zoom with Nancy @ 4pm
- Wed. 3/12 on zoom @ 7pm
- Fri 3/14 on zoom @ 8 with Men's group
- Sundays in person 11:30-12:30

Sign up on the church patio after worship
Book available for purchase \$20 on the patio

Attention UMCW Walkers!

CROP Hunger Walk Kickoff



**SUNDAY
MARCH 9**

Sign up on the patio to join
Team UMCW!



Walk will be held on March 23

*Celebrate
St. Patrick's Day*
In Sunday School
March 16



TAX SERVICES!

IRS Certified Volunteers Provide

FREE TAX RETURN PREPARATION



In conjunction with the Internal Revenue Service, trained and certified CSVP volunteers will provide FREE income tax preparation for persons in either of these categories:

- Seniors 60 years of age or older (any income level) OR
- Persons with an income of \$67,000 or less, regardless of age

Conejo Creek South Community Building 1350 E. Janss Rd., Thousand Oaks, 91362

Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays,
Thursdays, and Fridays

February 3 - April 15, 2025
8:30am - 4:00pm

SPANISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE

Mondays, 8:30am - 4:00pm &

Wednesdays, 8:30am - 4:00pm

MANDARIN TRANSLATION AVAILABLE

FRIDAYS, 8:30am - 4:00pm

Newbury Park Library

2331 Borchard Rd., Thousand Oaks, 91320

WEDNESDAYS ONLY

Wednesday, February 5 -
Wednesday, April 9, 2025
10:00am - 4:00pm

MANDARIN TRANSLATION AVAILABLE

10:00am - 4:00pm

No appointments taken - First-come, first-served basis. Please read all information.

WHAT TO BRING

- For married filing joint, both spouses must be present
- Photo identification
- Social Security cards or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number documents for you, your spouse, and dependents
- Birth dates for you, spouse, and dependents
- A copy of last year's Federal and State tax return
- All Forms W-2, 1098, and 1099
- Interest and dividend statements (1099-INT; 1099-DIV; 1099-B)
- Form 1095-A (Marketplace Health Insurance)
- Other relevant information on income, expenses, deductions
- Information for all deductions/credits
- Total paid to child care provider and their tax ID number
- Bank Routing numbers for direct deposit

WILL PREPARE TAX RETURNS THAT INCLUDE

- Wages, salaries, etc. (Form W-2)
- Interest Income (Form 1099-INT)
- Dividends Received (Form 1099-DIV)
- State Tax Refunds (Form 1099-G)
- Unemployment Benefits (Form 1099-G)
- IRA Distributions (Form 1099-R)
- Pension Income (Forms 1099-R, CSA-1099)
- Social Security Benefits (Form SSA-1099)
- Capital Gain/Loss (Form 1099-D)
- Sale of Home (Form 1099-S)
- Self-employed Income (Form: 1099-MISC, 1099-NEC, 1099-K)
- Gambling Winnings (Form W-2G)
- Cancellation of Debt (Form 1099-C)
- Health Savings Accounts (Form 1099-SA)
- Itemized Deductions
- Education Credits (Form 1098-T)
- Child Tax Credit
- Earned Income Credit
- Prior Year and Amended Returns
- Business income/expenses for Schedule C (ONLY if there is a profit and expenses are under \$35,000; no home use, inventory, or depreciation)

CANNOT PREPARE

- Schedule E (No Rentals)
- Out-of-state-returns
- Married filing separate returns
- Returns with more than four K-1's

*This program is not a Thousand Oaks Library sponsored event

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT THE CSVP OFFICE, 805-381-2742 OR EMAIL CSVP@CRPD.ORG



Children's Music



**Music
in Sunday School
Begins 3/2**

**Performance
on Palm Sunday
4/13**

Let's sing !



Save the date for our next Saturday night Suppers!



Aloha

**APRIL SATURDAY NIGHT SUPPERS
APR 5, 5:30 IN ALTON HALL
HOSTED BY CATHIE & WAYNE LOEB
AND AGNES & KEN DOUGHERTY**

SOCIAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE



Give liberally and be ungrudging when you do so. . . Since there will never cease to be some in need on the earth, I therefore command you, "Open your hand to the poor and needy neighbor in your land."
Deuteronomy 15:10-11

As our Church begins its journey through Lent, it has chosen to study *The Grace of Les Misérables*. The author tells us that "*Les Misérables* is a story that wrestles with the intersection between offering grace and maintaining justice. . . It's the kind of story that leaves you asking better questions about God, the world, and our role within it."

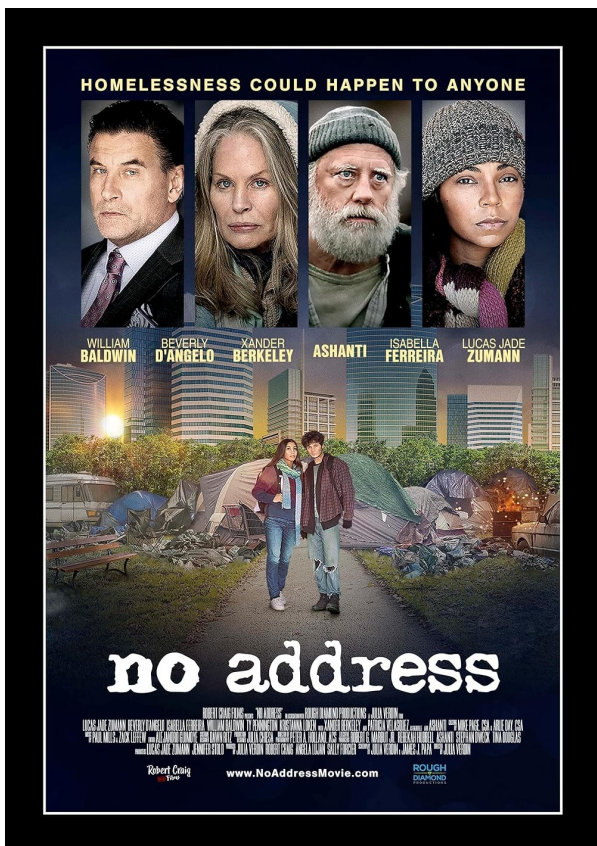
As a Christian community, we ask ourselves how do we "open (our) hand to the poor and needy."

During our Lenten journey, the Missions and Social Concerns Committees will be highlighting ways our congregation reaches out to help those in need. We encourage you to support these programs.

- **Conejo Valley CROP Walk March 23** - an interfaith community walk that supports Church World Service and local food programs.
- **MANNA - local Conejo Valley Food Pantry.** The Manna drop off wagon is available each Sunday on the Church patio.
- **Harbor House Free Meal program** - Our Church provides one hot meal and one sack lunch meal each month.
- **Many Mansions Navigation Center.** Emergency and Transitional housing for homeless individuals. Opening around May 1. Look for information on a tour and how you can support this Many Mansions project.

See the movie **NO ADDRESS** a story of homelessness. Opens in theaters Feb 28. Supports harbor House

What does the Lord require of you? To act justly to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.
Micah 6:8





March Mission Moment

Attention UMCWV Walkers!

Greetings Organizers and fellow Walkers!

online resources.

Our meeting will be on Saturday, February 1 at 9:00am at St Patrick's Episcopal Church in Thousand Oaks. Breakfast at 8:30am.

We have greatly reduced the amount of paper collateral that we use, but I will have some printed for those that need it. Or you can print your own, links are at <https://resources.crophungerwalk.org/resources/promote-your-walk/>.

Our sign-up page is online at <https://events.crophungerwalk.org/cropwalks/event/thousandoaksca> where Team Captains can register their teams in advance.

Amir, can we still order more of the envelopes that we have used in the past? I didn't see where to do that? Otherwise people will have to get their own envelopes and put the printable donor form inside. I will get out other blasts but I looked at the calendar and thought wow, need to send this out now!

I am having signs made, and should get the order in ASAP so I have them in time for the meeting. I am probably going to use the attached for artwork (created by my son-in-law, thanks J!). Comments or suggestions please?

All suggestions welcome and bring your promotional ideas to the meeting also!

I am also attaching the walker toolkit with links to

Get set, and go! Walk on,

WALK. GIVE. CHANGE THE WORLD

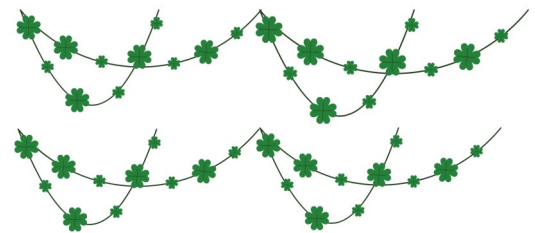
CROP HUNGER WALK 2025

March 23rd @ 1pm
California Lutheran University Plaza
60 West Olsen Road, Thousand Oaks

Contact and information:
events.crophungerwalk.org/cropwalks/event/thousandoaksca
ConejoValleyCropWalk@gmail.com

Our CROP Hunger Walks empower communities nationwide, raising funds for global missions and local hunger relief.

Scan to learn more



Non-perishable food drop off available every Sunday!

BLOOD DRIVE

Because of you, life doesn't stop.



United Methodist Church BLOOD DRIVE

Saturday, March 8
8:30am – 12:00pm
In the bloodmobile at
1049 S. Westlake Blvd



To make an appointment,
Please use the QR Code
or call 877-25-Vital



APPOINTMENTS
are encouraged.



Ask us how you can
POWER UP your donation.

To make an appointment:

SCAN QR
code or visit
[Vitalant.org](https://www.vitalant.org)



CALL
877-258-4825
877-25-VITAL



Use the
**VITALANT
DONOR APP**



vitalant.
Blood Donation

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

HELTON, John & Pat 03/08
 STONE, Russ & Barbara 03/18
 DEHAVEN, John & Jean 03/29



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

WELLS, Andrew 03/01
 GRAY, Curt 03/02
 SWANSON, Nadina 03/02
 PHILLIPSON, Katie 03/06
 PHILLIPSON, Tom 03/09
 FEY, Elaine 03/10
 MARBACH, Phyllis 03/12
 PHILLIPSON, Dominic 03/16
 STONE, Russ 03/22
 SHIHABI, Angelina 03/24
 SHIHABI, Mark 03/26
 SANDERS, Janelle 03/27
 HELTON, Pat 03/28
 SWANSON, Shirley 03/30
 BARMASSE, Jack 03/31
 EVANS, Gary 03/31

TREASURER'S REPORT

Jan 2025 Income:
 \$47,545
 Jan 2025 Expenses:
 \$47,709
 Fiscal YTD Income:
 \$47,545
 Fiscal YTD Expenses:
 \$47,709

ATTENDANCE

	In-Person	YouTube	Total
Jan. 5	75	88	166
Jan. 12	70	42	112
Jan. 19	87	66	154
Jan. 29	87	59	

January YouTube totals are taken as of 2/27/2025.



Finance Corner

Q. I would like to invite folks to attend a service at our wonderful church. What are some ways to do that?

A. You can invite them to attend with or without you at our location, 1049 Westlake Blvd or if they prefer, go to YouTube and type in "United Methodist Church Westlake Village". We have 210 subscribers to our YouTube channel as of February 8!



Ministries of the church happen through the faithful efforts of its lay people.

CHURCH COUNCIL

Chair: Rick Schroeder

OFFICERS

Lay Leader:.....Jeanie Severance
Lay Delegates to Annual Conference:..... Boyd Donavon,
Rick Schroeder
Treasurer:.....Lee Friel
Assistant Treasurer:.....John Shehorn
Financial Secretary: Agnes Dougherty
Church Historian Carol Ames

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEES

Communications:..... Carol Ames
Finance: John Shehorn
Foundation: Don Phillipson
Nominations: Pastor Darren
Staff Parish Relations:..... (Chair elected in Jan. 2025)
Stewardship John Shehorn
Trustees (Chair elected in Jan. 2025)

PROGRAMMATIC COMMITTEES

Christian Education.....Amy Comparato
Growing Place.....Tom Sutphen
Conejo ConnectRick Schroeder
Membership Care.....Jeanie Severance
Membership Growth
Missions Committee Cathie Loeb
Music..... Barbara Ghosh & Carol Ames
Social Concerns CommitteeChris & Kitty Soltow

AGE-LEVEL MINISTRIES

Family Ministries:
Men's Ministries: Tom Hopkins
Women's Ministries:..... Candice Shehorn

MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

Clergy..... Pastor Darren
Youth Rep
General Nancy Moravec, David Keddle



STAFF - PARISH RELATIONS

SPRC is always interested in hearing from our Church Family. You may e-mail members at SPRC@umcww.org, contact the chair through the church office or attend one of its upcoming meetings for a brief discussion time.

S
P
R
C

Cindy Faccone
Jan Sorenson
Polly Tattersall Martin

} 2025

Roz Thebaud
Candi Wilcox
Linda Northrup

} 2026

Janet Todd
Wayne Loeb

} 2027

COVENANT DEADLINE
For April Noon March 15

Senior Pastor: Rev. Darren Cowdrey
revdarren@umcww.org

Director of Children & Youth Ministries:
Charissa Birmingham
charissaumcww@gmail.com

Administrative Director: Vinia Pavlath
vinia@umcww.org

Media Tech: Kallie Smith

Director of Music: Gloria Hilliard
gloria@umcww.org

Organist: Jenny Lee
jenny@umcww.org

Bell Choir Director: Nick Newkirk
NNewkirk49@yahoo.com

Children's Choir Director: Katy Herbst de Cortina

Treasurer: Leroy Friel

Financial Secretary: Agnes Dougherty

Kids Zone Attendant: Aurora Smith

The Growing Place Preschool
Director: Jen Sorensson



Resident Bishop:
Rev. Dr. Dottie
Escobedo-Frank

**North District
Superintendent:**
Rev. Garth Gilliam

Office Phone:
805-497-7884



Welcome!

*Join Us For Worship Each Sunday
At 10 a.m.*

*In-person worship is available in the
sanctuary.*

Or

*Join us for the online service live at 10 a.m.
each Sunday at umcww.org - or watch it
later on our website or YouTube.*

*Check website for additional details or
changes in scheduling.*

*UMCWW continues to thrive.
To see ways you can be a part of our
community, go to umcww.org*



Setting a Course for a Better Life

United Methodist Church
Westlake Village