



West L. A. Connections

Where **N**urturing **E**mpowerment **W**elcoming **S**ervice Happens!

A Monthly Publication of the West Los Angeles United Methodist Church

November 2013

West Los Angeles United Methodist Church

1913 Purdue Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90025
Phone: 310-479-1379
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Website: www.wlaumc.com

Office Hours

Monday–Friday, 9AM to 1 PM

Pastors' Office Hours

Rev. Gary: Tues-Fri, 9 AM to 1 PM
Rev. Janet: Tues-Fri, 9 AM to 1 PM
Rev. Becky: Sat, 10 AM to 12 PM

Sunday Worship Services

◆ 9:30 AM

English Language Worship
Child Care and Sunday School

◆ 10:30 AM

Fellowship Time for both congregations

◆ 11:00 AM

Japanese Language Worship

Staff

Rev. Gary Oba, Senior Pastor
Email: obagary@gmail.com

Rev. Janet Cromwell, Associate Pastor
Email: jlcromwell8@gmail.com

Rev. Rebecca Hirata, Local Pastor
Japanese Language Ministry
Email: pastorwlaumc@yahoo.co.jp

Lina Yamaguchi,
Secretary and Newsletter Coordinator
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Our Mission Statement

Our Mission is to promote spiritual growth - Building a community of faith and making disciples of Christ by reaching out with compassion, forgiveness and love. At West LA UMC, building a community of faith is what we are about.

Welcoming Children and Families with Special Needs

On October 20, West LA UMC hosted a program entitled, “It takes a Village: Supporting Children with Autism In Our Congregation.” The event was designed to assist our congregation in becoming more knowledgeable of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) so that we may become more welcoming and supportive of children and families.



We were blessed to have Drs. Mariko Yamazaki and Janet (Hifumi) Gunter presenting information on the role of occupational therapy for children with ASD, current diagnostic criteria, myths and misconceptions, and supportive strategies and problem-solving. Both

Mariko and Janet are occupational therapists working with children and are familiar with our church.

One of the first things we learned was that 1 in 88 children (1 in 54 boys) will be diagnosed with some degree of autism. Understanding the characteristics and possible behaviors of persons with ASD is a helpful first step in becoming a more welcoming and accessible church. Janet described how some children with ASD may have difficulty making eye contact, engaging in reciprocal conversation, or comprehending nonverbal communication. They may have more trouble making transitions from one activity to another, and may require a predictable routine in order to feel comfortable and at ease.

Mariko and Janet reminded us that each child and family’s needs are unique, so the best way to support children is to partner with their parents. Parents can provide helpful insights on how to best assist a child learn, grow, and be a part of activities. Janet’s advice is to ask, “Do you need help?” and “How can I help?”

As a congregation, we can put parents at ease by being open and remaining calm. We can encourage parents to arrive early with their children for a “dress rehearsal” before worship and Sunday School. We look forward to having volunteers who are willing to be “buddies” to accompany children with special needs, and identifying “quiet places” in our church where families can step aside if a child becomes over-stressed or begins to have an emotional melt down.

Above all, we want *all of God’s children* to feel welcome, loved, and included in our faith family. We have more to learn and do and, by God’s grace, we will share the love of Jesus with everyone!

Sincerely,

Rev. Janet Cromwell

Prayers and Fellowship

Connecting and Nurturing through Prayers

As a community of faith, we support one another through prayer. To add or remove a prayer request, please contact one of the pastors or the church office.

Asian Cultural Bazaar



Proclaiming the Word Workshop



Would you like to better learn how to speak and hear the scripture reading?

Jack Ong and Pam Sase Ryder will offer a "Proclaiming the Word" workshop on Saturday, November 16, at 1:30 PM in the sanctuary. This workshop is for anyone who would like to be a Liturgist or Scripture Reader during worship.

Even if you do not plan to read during worship service, the "Proclaiming the Word" workshop is fun and you will be surprised how it will change how you hear the spoken Word.

Lectionary Readings for November

These readings serve as the foundation for the Wednesday morning Bible Study and Sunday morning Worship Services. By reading these scripture lessons during the week, you can prepare your heart and mind for Sunday worship.

Nov. 1, All Saints Day	Daniel 7:1-3, 15-18 Psalm 149 or Psalm 150	Ephesians 1:11-23 Luke 6:20-31
Nov. 3	Habakkuk 1:1-4; 2:1-4 Psalm 119:137-144	2 Thessalonians 1:1-4, 11-12 Luke 19:1-10
Nov. 10	Haggai 1:15b-2:9 Psalm 145:1-5, 17-21	2 Thessalonians 2:1-5, 13-17 Luke 20:27-38
Nov. 17	Isaiah 65:17-25 Isaiah 12 or Psalm 118	2 Thessalonians 3:6-13 Luke 21:5-19
Nov. 24	Jeremiah 23:1-6 Luke 1:68-79	Colossians 1:11-20 Luke 23:33-43
Nov. 28	Deuteronomy 26:1-11 Psalm 100	Philippians 4:4-9 John 6:25-35

Worship & Studies

Growing in Faith through Worship and Studies

November 9:30 AM Worship Services

**November 3 – 24th Sunday after Pentecost
All Saints Sunday / Family Worship /
Holy Communion.** Rev. Gary Oba preaching.
Text: Luke 19:1-10. Theme: God sees any change of
heart. Rev. Janet Cromwell giving children's message.

November 10 – 25th Sunday after Pentecost
Rev. Gary Oba preaching. Text: Luke 20:27-38
Theme: Resurrection is unlike anything we have
experienced before!
Rev. Janet Cromwell giving children's message.

November 17 – 26th Sunday after Pentecost
Deaconess Jeanne Roe Smith, guest preacher
Director, Wesley Foundation at UCLA
Rev. Janet Cromwell giving children's message.

**November 24 – Last Sunday after Pentecost
Worship with Praise Band**
Rev. Gary Oba preaching. Text: Luke 23:33-43
Theme: Christ is a king unlike any other king.
Rev. Janet Cromwell giving children's message.

November 27 – Thanksgiving Eve Service, 7:30 PM
Enjoy a peaceful moment to give God thanks for your
many blessings at this special Thanksgiving Eve
worship service in the Sanctuary. The Youth and
Youth Leaders will provide leadership.

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## **Christmas Eve Choir & Handbells**

With the Advent season quickly approaching, it is  
time to start preparing for the Christmas Eve worship  
service. This year, both the chancel choir and handbell  
choir will be performing special music for the service.  
The choir will be performing "Candles and Carols," a  
Christmas Cantata for choir, soloists, and chamber  
orchestra. The handbell choir will also be performing  
two pieces in addition to the cantata.

All congregation members are invited to join either  
or both ensembles. The rehearsal schedule is as  
follows:

- Cantata rehearsals are Tuesday nights from 7:00-  
7:30 PM in the sanctuary.
- Cantata dress rehearsal (with orchestra) Tuesday,  
December 17, 6:00-8:00 PM.
- Handbell rehearsals are Sundays from 11:00-  
12:00 PM in Room 6 starting on Sunday,  
November 10.

Please join us for great music and fellowship!

## Sunday School and Bible Studies

### **Children's Sunday School**

Sunday School helps children to learn about God,  
the life of Jesus, and important lessons in the Bible.

In November, Ages 3 through Grade 3 will meet in  
Room 3 to learn about Thanksgiving and begin  
preparations for the Christmas Pageant. We look  
forward to seeing your children in Sunday School!

|                    |                                 |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| Infants & Toddlers | Nursery (next to the sanctuary) |
| Age 3 to Grade 3   | Explorer Room 3                 |
| Grades 4-8         | Trekker Room 2                  |
| Grades 9-12        | Youth Room 8 (located upstairs) |

### **Women's Bible Study Group**

Mondays 1:00 to 2:30 PM in Room 9.

In November we will continue our series on the  
theme "God's People Worship". Our lessons from the  
book of Nehemiah give us a perspective on worship in  
Jerusalem after a remnant of Israel returns home from  
exile in Babylon. The women take turns facilitating the  
class discussion using the Adult Bible Study series.  
New members welcome!

### **"Alive Now" Study Group**

Wednesdays, 9:00-10:15 AM in Room 2.

This study focuses on the lectionary text that will  
be the basis for Sunday's sermon. (See page 2 of this  
Newsletter for a list of scripture lessons.) New  
members are always welcome to join the conversation.  
See Rev. Gary Oba for more information.

### **Thursday Bible Study**

Thursdays, 7:30-9:00 PM in Learning Center.

The group continues a study of the gnostic gospels,  
including the gospels of Thomas, Mary, and Judas.  
The study meets weekly on Thursday evenings. New  
members are welcome. Please see Rev. Gary for class  
materials. No study on Nov. 28 and Dec. 5.

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Membership Class

Persons interested in exploring membership at
West LA UMC are invited to attend a three-session
orientation on December 1, 8, and 15. The orientation
to membership will cover the history of West LA UMC,
an introduction to The United Methodist Church, and
the meaning of baptism and membership. Each
session will be from 11:15 to 12:00 Noon in Room 2.
Please see Rev. Gary for details.

Children, Youth, and Family Ministries

Supporting Families in Spiritual Growth and Discipleship

Thanksgiving Card Making



On Sunday, November 10, join us in the Social Hall after worship as children, youth, and adults create Thanksgiving Cards to send to our homebound members. Supplies will be provided to make colorful cards. Everyone is welcome to participate.

Thanksgiving Week Youth Activities

The youth group is busy preparing for Thanksgiving. They are collecting canned goods for the food baskets which will be delivered to needy families. If you would like to donate canned goods, please bring them to church by November 24. They are also asking for donations of turkeys. If you would like to donate any turkeys, please let Dave or Emily Cook know, and bring them to church on November 24. Delivery of food baskets (including turkeys) will begin several days before Thanksgiving.

On Thanksgiving Eve, November 27, the youth are having an overnight at church during which time they will be preparing 3 or 4 complete meals to deliver on Thanksgiving morning. There will also be a worship service that evening, and all are encouraged to attend. David Cook and Curtis Rooks will be speaking.

If you have any questions about what food items you can donate, please see the flier in the Social Hall or contact David or Emily Cook at 562-494-1361.

Ohana 2.0

A New Group for Parents of Young Children

Under the leadership of Jane Shimotsu and Jeri Okamoto Floyd, West LA UMC is hosting a new group for parents of young children, from birth through Pre-K. The new *Ohana 2.0* is designed with time for prayer, playing with children, parenting ideas, conversation, and mutual support. Each participant received a Journal for recording ideas and reflections.



The next meeting will be held on Friday, November 1 at 10:00 AM in Room 1. A potluck dinner is planned for Saturday, November 23 at 4:30 PM at Tongva Park in Santa Monica (or, in case of rain, at West LA UMC).

New members are welcome, especially now as the group is forming. For more information, please contact Jane Shimotsu.

Christmas Toy Drive

Beginning this month, Social Action Commission is coordinating a Christmas Toy Drive. Toys are being collected to share with two groups of recipients, South Central Los Angeles families and Mexican families across the San Diego/Tijuana border.

Families in South Central are those with whom we have shared food baskets and other gifts during the year at Easter, Thanksgiving, Christmas and other occasions. These families are very low income and very appreciative of our church's support. Dave Cook and our church youth have identified the families and visited with them during the deliveries.

The Mexican families had been a ministerial program of the Pico Union Shalom Mission, but the Methodist Church District no longer funds Pico Union. It's former pastor, the Rev. Vilma Cruz-Baez, is now assigned to Iglesia Metodista La Plaza (Olvera Street in downtown LA) and is continuing this ministry. It is an especially noteworthy program. Although her parishioners are themselves generally lower income, they have sought out those who are more in need than themselves to help.

We of WLAUMC are very fortunate to be able to share our blessings with these two ministries. Please bring unwrapped toys for children from pre-school through adolescence. In the past, gifts that have been especially welcomed were art and crafts supplies, books, sports equipment, musical instruments, etc. Generally it is better not to include toys that require batteries.

Submitted by Cooke Sunoo,
Social Action

Christmas Pageant

"Just a Little Christmas" is a delightful retelling of the story of Jesus' birth. All of our children and youth are encouraged to participate in this year's Christmas Pageant directed by Sharon Kinoshita-Gill, Victoria Yamashita, and Rev. Janet Cromwell.



Rehearsals will take place during Sunday School beginning November 17. The Pageant will be presented on Sunday, December 15 during the 9:30 worship service.

Outreach & Social Service

Serving Our Community and World

Fair Trade for the Holidays!!!

Its fall and the holidays are upon us! Social Action Commission is again sponsoring the win-win-win solution for snacking, doing good, stocking stuffing and gift giving. Purchasing Fair Trade products helps small farmers, provides healthier organic products and is an alternative to corporate supermarket products.

Natural cashews, dried mango, pineapple, and wild apricots are new healthy snacks now offered as Fair Trade treats for the holidays. Wonderful extra virgin Palestine olive oil, organically grown cocoa beans, and cane sugar shipped to Switzerland and transformed into caramel sea salt crunch, extra dark and other chocolate bars. I'm getting hungry.

New Fair Trade items as well as the "classics" will be available for sale after Sunday morning worship services November 17 through December 22, but shop early for the best choices. If you see something on the sales table buy it while it's there. Special orders take two weeks and are subject to minimum requirements and the vagary of UPS delivery schedules.

Christmas gift baskets will be available by advance order only. Lovely baskets, cellophane wrapped with special bows will be prepared to your specifications. Order forms are available. Orders must be prepaid and submitted by Sunday December 1 and will be ready for pick up on Sunday, December 15.

What a happy, frantic and blessed time of the year!!

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## Ralph's Market Rewards Program

### Time to Re-Register!

Thank you to all who regularly use their "Ralph's Club Cards" on behalf of WLA UMC. From September 1, 2012 to August 31, 2013, Ralph's has rewarded WLAUMC with over \$900 which has been used for the work of our Social Action Commission.

Each year on September 1, Ralph's requires customers to re-register their cards. You can register on the Internet at [www.Ralphs.com](http://www.Ralphs.com) or take the following "bar code" to Ralph's and have the cashier scan it and your Ralph's Club Card or telephone number. Thank you for re-registering your Club Card and for supporting this rewards program!

NPO# 90163

WEST LOS ANGELES UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



## PATH is about People

Dale and I volunteered to serve dinner at PATH (People Assisting the Homeless) in the month of August. As we finished setting up all the food trays that Jane Harada had prepared, a delightful young woman suddenly appeared. Megan Colvard introduced herself as the Associate Director of Community Engagement for PATH. She had left her downtown office for the evening and wanted to stop by the West Los Angeles facility to see just who these WLAUMC people were. She had noticed that WLAUMC was on the roster every second Monday of the month and she came to thank them for their faithful commitment.

Dale and I assured Megan that we were but two of a long list of cooks and servers who had volunteered for PATH over the years. So, she decided to come to our church to meet and thank more of the volunteers! In September, she attended a Social Action Committee meeting to express her gratitude and soon she will attend one of our 9:30 worship services.

Megan is full of enthusiasm for her work with the homeless. I hope you have a chance to meet and speak with her. She is the human connection that Rev. Gary spoke of recently in one of his sermons. PATH is not just a large organization; it is full of individuals waiting to meet us!

Cindy Morimoto

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Manzanar National Historic Site Tour – Thank You!

We gratefully acknowledge the following donors and Committee Members.

Donors: California Trust Bank, Mike Dote, DDS, Ken Harada, DDS, Hashimoto Nursery, Pacific Commerce, Otto and Eleanor Nakano, Carole Nakano, Jeri Okamoto Floyd and Sadie Hifumi.

Manzanar Committee Members: Rose Honda, Sadie and Fred Hifumi, Keiko Kano, Eleanor and Otto Nakano, Norman Sakamoto and Randy Sakamoto.

West Los Angeles United Methodist Church: Rev. Gary Oba, Rev. Janet Cromwell, Rev. Becky Hirata and Diane Yamagata.

Manaznar National Historic Site: Ranger Kristen Luetkemeier, Tour Guide.





Manzanar Pilgrimage 2013

FAREWELL TO MANZANAR

Dedicated in memory of the late Mary Ishizuka

On a clear September Saturday morning, 46 persons – ages three months to 93 years old – journeyed to Manzanar to visit a place in the desert which was home to 10,000 persons of Japanese ancestry during WWII. Of the 46 persons, eight were former internees at Manzanar.

Enroute we saw a film of the life story of Ralph Lazo, a Mexican American youth, who voluntarily went to Manzanar to be with his Japanese friends. We also heard a narrative on the history of the Owens Valley and the Owens River Water Restoration Project. Nearing Manzanar we glimpsed a view of the Lone Pine train depot where some internees were dropped off in 1942 upon arrival in the arid desert. Interestingly, today the train depot is a private residence.

Our lunch break was on the grounds of the picturesque Mt. Whitney Fish Hatchery. No longer a working hatchery, it is now maintained by a volunteer group for enjoyment by the public.

After lunch we arrived at the Manzanar National Historic Site where we were greeted by Ranger Kristen Luetkemeier who boarded the bus and took us on a tour of the camp. On the auto tour, we stopped at Merritt Park, designed and built by Mary Ishizuka's father, Mr. Kuichiro Nishi, during his time in Manzanar. Fully restored by archaeologists, Merritt Park is graced with a replicated bridge built by Barry Amos. With a recent torrential rainstorm, two neighboring creeks overflowed and flooded the grounds, inundating Manzanar with water and mud. To our dismay and surprise, we saw foot deep dry, cracked mud in the park ponds – all of which will be dug out eventually by volunteers.

In Block 14 we visited the restored original mess hall, now filled with exhibits, displays and "picnic" style dining tables. Two new barracks have been constructed, depicting how the internees lived in a 20' x 20' room. Budget permitting, eventually the communal bathrooms and laundry room will be reconstructed. Returning to the museum, we were able to view the orientation film, the exhibits and/or visit the gift shop. Five of our traveling youth – Karissa,

Kortney and Karolyn Maeda and Ally and Jennifer Yamashita – completed a Manzanar course of study earning Junior Ranger badges.

Bishop was our destination for the night. After dinner, we had an opportunity for a "sharing time" with Supt. Les Inafuku, who updated us on events, programs and progress at Manzanar. This was our last opportunity with the superintendent as he will be retiring in January 2014.

Sunday morning after breakfast, many of us walked to Schat's Bakery to purchase delectable breads and pastries to take home. The Eastern California Museum in Independence was our next stop and then we returned to Manzanar for a brief worship service at the cemetery, led by Rev. Janet, where we were buffeted by strong blowing winds much like those we experienced during camp days. *Origami* cranes made by the newly commissioned Junior Rangers were given to us to be placed as memorials on the cemetery monument as we departed.

Leaving Manzanar, we toured the picturesque Alabama hills, site of many western movies. After lunch at the Lone Pine Visitors' Center picnic tables, we boarded the bus ready for an afternoon nap enroute back to LA.

Thank you to the committee members for making this trip, not only interesting and educational, but also most memorable. Arriving back at the church about 5:30pm, Rose announced this was the committee's last trip – truly a "farewell to Manzanar."

Submitted by Grace Seto

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### Manzanar Reflections

Our recent excursion to Manzanar was our first visit there for Hideyo and me. We were not internees there so I went with little expectations but surprisingly I found it to be a very moving experience. I was somewhat stunned when I had an emotional reaction as I stepped into the barrack and felt the felling of déjà vu. Also, entering the mess hall brought back floods of memories of having my meals with my father and eating those infamous mutton stews that one could smell from blocks away. It almost moved me to tears.

My one regret is that Hideyo was not able to have the full experience of our visit as his vision had gotten so bad. However, he says he's glad he went. It was a memorable trip.

*Hideyo & Mitzi Takimoto*

I enjoyed the Manzanar trip because I got to see how people had to live. I also liked it because I got to see my friends from church and I got a junior ranger badge. Lastly, I got Piggies\* (a big one and a little one).

Your friend,  
*Jennifer Yamashita*

\* Jennifer is talking about the piggy bank and keychain that were in the goodie bags! She is a 2<sup>nd</sup> Grader.

# Asian Cultural Bazaar

Faith, Food, Music, and More!



## 2013 ASIAN CULTURAL BAZAAR: A Day of Joy and Celebration

For over 60 years, our Church has opened its hearts, minds and doors to the community with its Asian Cultural Bazaar. This year, on a beautiful sun-lit Saturday, the tradition lived on in all its people and God-driven energy and vitality that we've come to love. We came together as a family and community of faith, working together as we experienced and shared God's love and grace.

It was truly a day where the Holy Spirit moved among all of us - a day of fun and fellowship. The Bazaar again featured delicious food items, fresh fruits, baked goods, beautiful plants and flowers, and games, crafts and face painting for the children, as well as door prizes and a very popular Second Chance Store for gently used items. The Silent Auction was again successful and was filled with unique Japanese art objects, prints and paintings and traditional tableware, as well as many other valuable generously donated items and gifts.

In keeping with our mission theme, this year's Silent Auction also featured hand-crafted necklaces from the Nozomi Jewelry Project. As Kay Yang explained, "Our Church's partnership is helping to bring hope, dignity and livelihood to the women in Ishinomaki who make these pieces. Holding a beautiful necklace that has been made from a broken tsunami shard is a wonderful reminder to each of us that beauty does come from brokenness. The women of Nozomi are encouraged by our willingness to sell their products, raise awareness of their on-going struggles, and pray for their future."

To everyone's delight and enjoyment, entertainment was provided throughout the day by gifted musicians and dancers - entertainment which included rock and roll and rhythm and blues sounds, Taiko drumming, Hula, and contemporary folk, and Japanese choral music. On display in our sanctuary

were artistic creations by our Church members, including the art pieces of youth and children, as well as a masterful cultural/historical presentation curated by our Church Historian, Randy Sakamoto.

We are so very thankful to the many generous individuals and businesses who donated various gifts and items to our Bazaar. This support was invaluable to the success of our Bazaar. We are also very thankful to all who worked so very hard to make our annual event a blessing to all.

In the coming weeks, the Bazaar Planning Committee will be meeting to evaluate this year's celebration and would welcome your input. Please see or call Sonia Dixon, Doug Yamaguchi, Stan Shimotsu, or Reverends Gary, Janet or Becky, or drop an email note to [wlaumc@aol.com](mailto:wlaumc@aol.com). Most importantly, we thank God for the grace and love He bestowed upon us during our Saturday event and throughout our lives.

In the name of our Lord who calls us His beloved,  
*The Bazaar Planning Committee*



## Japanese Film Night

Since the inception of our first open door film screening in 2011, I have received so many kind words, letters and gestures of appreciation from so many folks who enjoy and love the monthly movie selections presented at our West Los Angeles United Methodist Church. All thanks especially to the many of you who had been so loyal and supportive of our "Friday Night at the Movies" Japanese Film screenings.

My hope is that the monthly continuation of OUR Japanese movie screenings presented at WLAUMC for the New Year, serve to help support and promote the Mission Statement of this church and our family of faith community in some small measure.

Lastly, our final film "LEONIE" for this season marked our 30<sup>th</sup> FNATH Japanese Film screening. Thank you very much on behalf of Jean and David, too for your courtesy and continued show of support. The pleasure has been all mine! I remain with a thankful heart.

Gratefully,  
Gregory Shikata

*Japanese Film Night will begin on Friday, January 31, 2014 with "Chronicle of My Mother" or "Waga Hana no ki." Please plan to join us in the new year as we continue viewing interesting and visually stunning films from Japanese directors.*



## Brian Asawa Concert

We are excited to announce a Christmas benefit performance by Brian Asawa on Sunday, December 8 at 2:00 PM at West LA UMC.

We are blessed that Brian Asawa, internationally renowned Countertenor, is generously sharing his talents and musical gifts to benefit our General Funds Music Ministry.

*Opera Today* states, "Brian Asawa is the most important countertenor in the world today." Brian specializes in Baroque, early Classic and Modern concert and operatic repertoire.

Please mark your calendar and join us for this memorable event! \$50 General Admission, \$40 Pre-Sale Only. Tickets will be on sale soon! Please contact Sonia Dixon or Pam Ryder if you have any questions or would like to help make this a successful event!

## GO GREEN!

Wherever I am, the location is 100% enhanced if it reminds me of a movie set! I admit that's when everything in life comes together for me, especially when I'm traveling... and I am delighted to report that this tiny mountain village in Le Marche in Central Italy, a one-piazza town called Force (pronounced FOR'che) where friends recently rented an ancient villa for a month-long Italian immersion experience, is pretty much a movie set out of the really old days! I was blessed to spend a week there, even though I missed our famous church bazaar in the process.

In Force, one strolls the narrow, cobblestoned streets imagining how residents in the ancient houses with shutters of all colors could – at any moment – fling buckets of grey water and night soil right out their windows like in "Romeo and Juliet" or "Taming of the Shrew"!

But that doesn't happen anymore in today's thoroughly modern Italy, even in the remote villages where few tourists ever bother to visit. In fact, our driver in Rome (who told me his grandfather taught Mussolini how to play tennis!) wondered why we were even going to Force, three hours away through some of the most amazing tunnels anywhere. Alessandro was headed there for the first time in his life, and only because he was delivering us!

In fact, my sister Glenna and I were in Italy to join friends who had rented this old Bishop's House in Force, an expansive villa with sealed tunnels through which the bishop and priests fled from arrest and persecution. The thick walls! The vaulted doorways and ceilings! The countless rooms filled with so much history! The huge beams throughout the house! The huge lavender garden! The "donkey room" basement where the bishop's beast of burden was housed every night! Talk about a thrilling set just waiting to be explored, situated in a location where you could safely drink the tap water!

In the Bishop's House, out on the quaint streets of this old town, at the beach on the Adriatic Sea, wherever we went in Florence and Rome... may I just say that it was GREEN, reader! Italy has definitely gone green, and I am impressed. We here in WLA should be so conscientious when it comes to recycling and reusing. Beautifully designed recycling containers were located everywhere, some a 3-in-one center, and people used them. Green behavior was encouraged on public posters, in magazines and newspapers, even on TV. Not that I could understand much while watching Italian TV... but one lazy afternoon, we did find ourselves channel surfing, and actually saw "The Green Berets" - hearing John Wayne, George Takei, Jack Soo and Irene Tsu dubbed in Italian!

By Jack Ong



REUSE! REDUCE! RECYCLE!



# United Methodist Women

Women Learning, Growing, and Serving Others

## UMW Fulfill Mission Projects

UMW members met on Friday, October 18 to fulfill several mission projects.

For the second time this year, they packed ten layettes for newborn babies in Nome, Alaska. These layettes include onesies, receiving blankets, towels, facecloths, sweaters or jackets, all of which are made possible through our fundraisers and generous donations. The UMW has prepared these layettes for a number of years and Grace Seto has spearheaded each project, coordinating donations and making sure that each layette has all the requisite items. Thank you for your hard work, Grace!

A second project was the packing of toiletry items for UCLA low-income students. Thanks to all the donations of hotel toilet articles from our many travelers, we were able to pack a number of bags with toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, shampoo, lotion, etc. Thanks to Kathi Yamazaki for coordinating this project.

Food items were also collected for the UCLA Wesley Foundation to be distributed to the low-income students. Thank you to Eleanor Nakano who always makes sure that the food items are delivered to Campus Pastor Jeanne Smith who coordinates this program.

After all their hard work, the members enjoyed fellowship together with lunch prepared by Kathi Yamazaki and Sadie Hifumi.



## UMW Holiday Luncheon Outing December 7. Save the Date!

Saturday, December 7 has been set as the day of our Holiday Luncheon Outing with time and place to be announced. Kathi Yamazaki is chairing this event and would appreciate any help or suggestions.

## Café Chocolat Women's Retreat: Where Women Delight in God's Grace

Mark your calendar and plan to attend West LA UMC's Women's Retreat on Saturday-Sunday, March 22-23 at Aldersgate Retreat Center in Pacific Palisades. Together we will reflect on Jesus' miracles while we enjoy some delicious chocolate! What could be better than that?



Registration materials will be available soon. In the meantime, contact Stacey Hirose or Rev. Janet Cromwell if you have questions or would like to serve on the Retreat Planning Team.

## We Need Your Two Cents!



We are calling all old and new UMW members to a special luncheon meeting on Sunday, November 17 at 11:00 AM in the Learning Center. Please note that the original meeting date was re-scheduled to accommodate our working members.

This is a very important meeting for Elections and Calendar Planning for 2014. We need your ideas and vision for the future of UMW.

Don't miss this opportunity to get together with other members and give us your "two cents" worth of ideas. We want to hear from all of you so we will not learn later that that the UMW is not fulfilling your special vision.

Frances Uchida and Hisako Terasaki will provide lunch so please RSVP to let them know you are coming.

## West LA Prayer Ministry

Thursday mornings at 9:30 AM, a group prays for persons on the church's prayer list. If you would like to be a part of this prayer ministry but are unable to meet at the church on Thursday mornings, contact Lina Yamaguchi, Church Secretary at 310-479-1379. An updated prayer list will be emailed to you.



## Greetings from Argentina

I am sorry we have not been better correspondents. Life (as it is for you no doubt) is often so FULL. Sometimes it is hard to find words. Still, I hope you know you are so close to our hearts.

This past Sunday, we found a wonderful Methodist church just down the street from our house. Jennifer and I felt so embraced and welcomed. It was full of that beautiful Methodist spirit. But we also laughed: worshipping with the Methodists in this very-Catholic country!

I wanted to share a little reflection on our work with our students (Jennifer led this session, beautifully). Please feel free to share it with anyone who might be interested. <http://casadelamateada.wordpress.com/>.

Blessings on you and your good work in Los Angeles!

Much love from us.

*Doug Christie and Jennifer Abe*

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Mark Your Calendars

Thursday, December 5, 2013, 7:00 PM – West LA UMC’s All Church Conference with District Superintendent Rev. Kathey Michelle Wilborn in the Sanctuary. Deadline for submitting written reports is Monday, November 11.

Saturday, January 25, 2014 – West District Gathering and Conversation with Bishop Minerva Carcaño. Location and time to be announced.

Saturday, February 8, 2014 – West District Training Conference. Holman UMC, 8:00 AM – 2:00 PM.

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*We were delighted to have UM District Superintendent Kathey Wilborn and Los Angeles Councilmember Mike Bonin at the Bazaar in September.*

## Donate On-Line

It is easy to make a donation or pledge on-line at the West LA UMC web site [www.wlaumc.com](http://www.wlaumc.com). The secure site, sponsored by Vanco Services, enables persons to make contributions to the church’s general budget or special offerings. It is also possible to make donations in honor or in memory of a loved one. See Diane Yamagata or Harriet Woo for more information.

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A New Way to Shop And help WLAUMC too!

The United Methodist Church has developed an online micro-donation tool to support local church ministries. UMC Market is a new, innovative and easy way to support the ministries of West LA UMC. As you begin your holiday shopping, please take a look at UMC Market at UMCmarket.org.

You will be asked to follow these simple steps to get started.

Step by Step Directions at UMCmarket.org:

1. Watch the video "How it Works."
2. Click on the "Join Now" button to download UMCmarket’s shopping app to your computer.
3. You can become a member and shop directly from www.UMCmarket.org.
4. Browse through all of the categories and choose to shop from hundreds of stores.
5. Every time you shop, the stores will donate a portion of your purchase to our church. There is no additional cost to you.

Learn more at info@umcmarket.org. UMC Market is developed in cooperation with the General Council of Finance and Administration (GCFA) of The United Methodist Church.

Please consider joining UMC Market Today and start creating micro-donations for our church.

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## Health Care Reform and You Sunday, November 24

West LA UMC in cooperation with Keiro Senior HealthCare will host two presentations on Health Care Reform on Sunday, November 24 at 11:00 AM in English and 12:30 PM in Japanese. The speakers will explain what Health Care Reform is, how it affects individuals and families, and how to prepare for future changes.

These presentations are free and open to everyone. Join us in the Learning Center to learn more so that everyone can make wise health insurance choices.

# JAPANESE MINISTRY

## 「感謝祭」

今年も感謝祭の季節である。何を感謝するのかを考える機会が与えられ、私は、このシーズンを楽しむことにしている。日々の生活が守られている。健康も守られている。飢えることもなく、食べ物が与えられている。屋根のある家が与えられている。礼拝をする教会が与えられている。祈られている。。。などなど。書いていてはきりが無い。

毎年、WLA 教会恒例のターキーディナーも11月28日(木)5時から行われる。豊富な食べ物に毎年驚かされる。高橋ファミリーの奉仕に感謝したい。

今年は何名集うのか、楽しみである。去年は、20名以上の方がエンジョイした。私も含め、家でターキーを焼かない方、焼けない方がいる。一緒に食べて、感謝祭のお祝いをするのは素晴らしいと思う。

放蕩息子の話しの中に、息子が帰ってきたから、喜び食べて祝うパーティーの話しがある。(ルカ15章)

いなくなっていた息子が見つかり、感謝で溢れる場面である。父の心がよく表現されている。皆で喜ぶ時には、モチが必要ということ。食べると元気になり、頑張ろうと励まされる人間の真理であろうか。しもべ達も、しばし、仕事を休んでおいしい食事を楽しむ時があり、喜んでいるであろう。

一人の人が父なる神様の所に戻る時、こんなに喜んでもらえるのである。神様の所に戻って来る兄弟姉妹が教会に与えられる時がある。一人が与えられる時、同じように喜び感謝を表す事が出来るように覚えたい。  
感謝祭おめでとうございます。

平田

## Happy Thanksgiving!

"Thanksgiving Day" is not Japanese holiday. So, I have learned to enjoy Thanksgiving Day over years in America. It is good to go over what I am thankful for... my everyday life, food I eat, church family, all the prayer support and love I receive, etc. I cannot write everything here!

Every year, our Nichigo group holds Thanksgiving Dinner. This year, it is on November 28 at 5:00 PM. We especially give "Kansha" to the Takahashi-family for arranging this celebration time. There were more than 20 people last year. It was just good to eat and give thanks to the Lord together.

When you read Luke 15, the Father wants a feast and celebration when his son comes home. "Because his second son was lost but now is found." (Luke 15:24) It just shows his heart was filled with happiness. It is like saying "We need Mochi!" I am sure that his servants did not mind taking time to enjoy good food.

I am always reminded of this story, when we receive new people who would like to come back to church after many years of searching. Receive one soul means a lot in the heaven. We remember to celebrate together as new people visit our church and worship God again.

Happy Thanksgiving Day!

Pastor Becky Hirata 平田

## Nichigo's November Calendar

|         |          |                            |
|---------|----------|----------------------------|
| Nov. 3  | 11:00 AM | Nichigo Worship            |
|         | 12:00 PM | Prayer Time                |
|         | 12:15 PM | Nichigo Council Mtg        |
| Nov. 10 | 11:00 AM | Nichigo Worship            |
|         | 12:00 PM | Bible Study                |
| Nov. 17 | 11:00 AM | Nichigo Worship            |
|         | 12:00 PM | Bible Study                |
| Nov. 24 | 11:00 AM | Nichigo Worship            |
|         | 12:30 PM | Health Care Reform Seminar |
| Nov. 27 | 7:30 PM  | Thanksgiving Eve Worship   |
| Nov. 28 | 5:00 PM  | Thanksgiving Dinner        |



# November 2013

| Sunday                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Monday                                                                                                                              | Tuesday                                                                                 | Wednesday                                                                                                                                      | Thursday                                                                                                                     | Friday                                                         | Saturday                                                                                 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Church Library Open Hours</b></p> <p>The Church Library will be open for reading and borrowing books on Sunday, November 3 from 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM. Come and see the library and use the many resources that are available to church members. Please contact Jean Dote for more information.</p> |                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                         |                                                               |                                                                                                                              | 1<br>10:00am Ohana 2.0<br>Parents with Young<br>Children Group | 2<br>9:00am Trustee's Mtg<br>11:00am SPRC Mtg                                            |
| <p><b>3 All Saints Sunday / Daylight Saving Time Ends</b></p> <p>9:30am Worship in English<br/>11:00am Worship in Japanese<br/>11:00am Church Library Open</p>                                                                                                                                           | 4<br>1:00pm Women's Bible<br><br>6:30-9:00pm Kelton AA Mtg                                                                          | 5<br>11:30am 80+ Women's Lunch<br><br>7:00pm Choir Rehearsal                            | 6<br>9:00am "Alive Now" Study<br>10:30am Tai-Chi Class<br><br>5:30pm Promise AA Mtg                                                            | 7<br>9:30am Prayer Meeting<br>10:30am Tai-Chi Class<br><br>7:30pm Bible Study                                                | 8                                                              | 9<br>12:00-4:00pm Asian Camp Reunion at Crowne Plaza Redondo Beach & Marina              |
| <p>10 Newsletter Article due</p> <p>9:30am Worship in English<br/>9:45am Sunday School &amp; Youth<br/>10:45am Thanksgiving Card Making<br/>11:00am Worship in Japanese</p>                                                                                                                              | <p>11 Church Conference Reports Due</p> <p>1:00pm Women's Bible<br/><br/>6:00am PATH Meal Service<br/>6:30-9:00pm Kelton AA Mtg</p> | 12<br><br>7:00pm Choir Rehearsal                                                        | 13<br>9:00am "Alive Now" Study<br>10:30am Tai-Chi Class<br><br>5:30pm Promise AA Mtg<br>7:30pm Finance Mtg                                     | 14<br>9:30am Prayer Meeting<br>10:30am Tai-Chi Class<br><br>7:30pm Bible Study                                               | 15<br>11:00 Staff Meeting                                      | 16<br><br>1:00 Proclaiming the Word Workshop for Liturgists & Scripture Readers          |
| <p>17</p> <p>9:30am Worship in English<br/>9:45am Sunday School &amp; Youth<br/>11:00am Worship in Japanese<br/>10:45am Fair Trade Sale<br/>11:00am UMW Planning Luncheon<br/>1:00pm Admin Council Mtg</p>                                                                                               | <p>18</p> <p>1:00pm Women's Bible<br/><br/>6:30-9:00pm Kelton AA Mtg<br/>7:00 Praise Band Rehearsal</p>                             | <p>19</p> <p>8:30am Fat Tuesday Men's Breakfast Mtg<br/><br/>7:00pm Choir Rehearsal</p> | <p>20</p> <p>9:00am "Alive Now" Study<br/>10:30am Tai-Chi Class<br/><br/>5:30pm Promise AA Mtg</p>                                             | <p>21</p> <p>9:30am Prayer Meeting<br/>10:30am Tai-Chi Class<br/><br/>7:30pm Bible Study</p>                                 | 22                                                             | <p>23</p> <p>4:00pm Praise Band Rehearsal<br/>4:30 Ohana 2.0 Potluck at Tongva Park.</p> |
| <p>24</p> <p>9:30am Worship in English<br/>9:45am Sunday School &amp; Youth<br/>10:45am Fair Trade Holiday Sale<br/>11:00am Worship in Japanese<br/>11:00am Health Care Reform Seminar in English<br/>12:30pm Health Care Reform Seminar in Japanese</p>                                                 | <p>25</p> <p>1:00pm Women's Bible<br/><br/>6:30-9:00pm Kelton AA Mtg</p>                                                            | <p>26</p> <p>7:00pm Choir Rehearsal</p>                                                 | <p>27</p> <p>9:00am "Alive Now" Study<br/>10:30am Tai-Chi Class<br/><br/>7:30pm Thanksgiving Eve Worship Service<br/>Youth Mission Project</p> | <p>28 Thanksgiving Day</p> <p>Thanksgiving Basket &amp; Meal Delivery<br/><br/>5:00pm Thanksgiving Dinner in Social Hall</p> | <p>29 Church Office Closed</p>                                 | <p>30</p>                                                                                |

 **Happy Thanksgiving!** 

**Thanksgiving Eve Worship**



Wednesday,  
November 27  
7:30 PM  
Sanctuary

You and your family are invited to pause, reflect, and give thanks for God's many blessings during this Thanksgiving Eve Worship Service! Join us giving thanks to God!

**Thanksgiving Dinner**




Thursday,  
November 28  
5:00 PM  
Social Hall

Join our church families celebrating Thanksgiving by sharing dinner together. RSVP to Keiko Takahashi at 310-818-6129 or the Church at 310-479-1379, Ext. 100 by Monday, November 25.

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**West LA United Methodist Church**

1913 Purdue Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90025  
wlaumc.com  310-479-1379

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*You can also view this newsletter online at [www.wlaumc.com](http://www.wlaumc.com)*

*Change Service Requested*

West Los Angeles United Methodist Church  
1913 Purdue Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90025  
November 2013

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