



La Tijera United Methodist Church Church Newsletter

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Los Angeles' Homelessness Crisis is a National Disgrace

The following is an excerpt from a Los Angeles Times' Editorial Board from February 25, 2018.

"There are few sights in the world like nighttime in skid row, the teeming Dickensian dystopia in downtown Los Angeles where homeless and destitute people have been concentrated for more than a century.

Homelessness burst its traditional borders several years ago, spreading first to gloomy underpasses and dim side streets, and then to public parks and library reading rooms and subway platforms. No matter where you live in L.A. County, from Long Beach to Beverly Hills to Lancaster, you cannot credibly claim today to be unaware of the squalid tent cities, the sprawling encampments, or the despair and misery on display there.

Today, a confluence of factors is driving people onto the streets. The shredding of the safety net in Washington and here in California is one.

(Consider the inexcusable shortage of federal Section 8 vouchers for subsidized low-income housing, or the dismally low level of "general relief payments" for the county's neediest single adults.)

Contrary to popular belief, the homeless in Los Angeles are not mostly mentally ill or drug addicted, raving or matted-haired or frightening — although a sizable minority meet some of those descriptions. They are not mostly people who drifted in from other states in search of a comfy climate in which to sponge off of others; the overwhelming majority have lived in the region for years. Today, a greater and greater proportion of people living on the streets are there because of bad luck or a series of mistakes, or because the economy forgot them — they lost a job or were evicted or fled an abusive marriage just as the housing market

was growing increasingly unforgiving.

It will surprise no one to learn that it is the most vulnerable among us who usually end up without a place to live. According to the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, more than 5,000 of the county's 58,000 homeless people are children and more than 4,000 are elderly. About one-third are mentally ill. Some 40% are African American. Also heavily represented: Veterans. The disabled. Young people from the county's overwhelmed juvenile justice system and its foster care programs. Men and women just released from jail, without the tools or skills needed for reentering society. Patients released from public hospitals — often with untreated cancers, infections, heart disease or diabetes. Victims of domestic violence.

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"DO NOT ABANDON YOURSELVES TO DESPAIR. WE ARE THE EASTER PEOPLE AND HALLELUJAH IS OUR SONG."

- POPE JOHN PAUL II

Dates to Remember . . .

03/04—9:30 a.m., Worship, Communion will be served

03/04—6:30 p.m., The Gathering

03/05—6:30 p.m., "What Makes a Hero?" Small Group Lenten Study

03/06—PATH West LA birthday celebration at 11:30 a.m.

03/11—9:30 a.m., Worship—UMCOR Sunday!

03/11—Daylight Savings Time begins

03/12—6:30 p.m., "What Makes a Hero?" small Group Lenten Study

03/15—6:30 p.m.—Ad Council

03/18—7 a.m., PATH West LA breakfast service

03/18—9:30 a.m., Worship

03/19—6:30 p.m., "What Makes a Hero?" Small Group Lenten Study

03/24—10 am to 12 noon—A Bead and a Prayer Workshop

03/24—3p.m.—Reconciling Conversations on a Way Forward at Hollywood UMC

03/25—9:30 a.m., Worship—Palm Sunday

03/26—6:30 p.m., "What Makes a Hero?" Small Group Lenten Study

03/29—6:30 p.m., Maundy Thursday Dinner and Service

03/30—Good Friday Service at St. Jerome Catholic Church

04/01—Easter Service at 9:30 a.m.

Reconciling Conversations on a Way Forward



Are you an ally of the LGBTQ community? Do you want to see changes in the UMC

that lead to a gracious welcome for all God's children? Are you curious about what is happening in the UMC and the Reconciling movement and how you can support RMN? You are invited!

The Commission on a Way Forward (COWF) was tasked by the Council of Bishops, with mandate from the 2016 General Conference, to suggest models that will get the United Methodist Church beyond the impasse on mat-

ters related to welcoming LGBTQ persons will meet in Los Angeles this month.

One of the COWF members, Dave Nuckols, has volunteered to speak to churches while he is in this region, and will be speaking at three churches in Southern California: Claremont UMC, First UMC of Pasadena, and Hollywood UMC. The event at Hollywood UMC will take place on March 24th at 3:00 p.m., and is expected to last approximately an hour and a half.

Dave Nuckols is a member

of the Commission on a Way Forward, the Treasurer of the Connectional Table, and a member of the Reconciling Ministries Network Board. He is also a lay leader of the Minnesota Conference. Dave is a parent of a queer daughter.

If you are interested in attending this event, please RSVP online to:

www.tinyurl.com/RMNconversations

(you will need to cut and past this address into your browser.)

“Jesus’ resurrection is the beginning of God’s new project not to snatch people away from earth to heaven but to colonize earth with the life of heaven.”

- N.T. Wright

Holy Week at La Tijera UMC

As we continue the journey through Lent, we offer the following experiences for expressions of worship and exploration:

Maundy Thursday

On Thursday, March 29th at 6:30 p.m., we are holding a Service of Reflection and Shadows. After the service, we will share a simple Lenten meal together. **RSVPs for the meal should be received by Friday, March 23rd. You may RSVP by emailing**

info@latijeraumc.org.

Good Friday

On March 30th at 11:00 a.m., a Good Friday processional will begin at Westchester Baptist Church, with a stop at La Tijera UMC for water and a blessing, and then continue to St. Jerome Catholic Church or an Interfaith Good Friday Service at 12 noon. If you would like to attend the service only, please join us at 12 noon at St. Jerome's. St. Jerome Church is located at 5550 Thornburn, right off of La Tijera Blvd.

The offering taken on Good Friday will be donated to our local LAX Food Pantry.

Easter

On Sunday, April 1st at 9:30 a.m., join us for a joyous Easter gathering! After this celebratory worship service, please stay afterwards for light refreshments at 10:45 a.m.

We are a Reconciling Church and ALL are invited—ALL are welcome. We live out our belief that God is a God of inclusive love and grace.

100% of our Easter offering will be donated to Didi Hirsh Mental Health Facilities' Suicide Prevention & Awareness programs.

A Bead and a Prayer Workshop

Prayer beads of many types exist throughout the world. Protestant prayer beads are made up of a cross or other pendant and thirty-three or more beads. One large bead, called the “invitatory bead,” reminds us that God invites us to a time of prayer.

On Saturday, March 24th, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon, we will hold a prayer bead workshop on campus in Chapel Lounge.

We will learn a bit about the history of prayer beads, and then, each person will make their own set of prayer beads to help explore this ancient tool of prayer.

We will be using Kristen E. Vincent’s “A Bead and a Prayer” book in our workshop—a copy of which will be raffled off to one lucky winner at the workshop!

This year, we are offering two kits to choose from:

Protestant Prayer Beads—or—Single-Decade Catholic Rosary Beads.

When you register to attend, please specify whether you wish to make a Single-Decade Catholic Rosary or Protestant Prayer Beads.

The cost of each kit is \$20.00; however if the cost is prohibitive, please contact Pastor Lyda and arrangements can be made depending on circumstances. Recommended age: high school through senior citizen. Childcare will not be provided.

Please register at: [Eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com) and search for “A Bead and a Prayer” workshop on March 24th.

Los Angeles’ Homelessness (continued from pg. 1)

All the great social issues of American society play out in homelessness — inequality, racial injustice, poverty, violence, sexism.

Solutions to the problem vary, depending on which portion of the homeless population you’re trying to help. In the months and years ahead, many more supportive housing units (which include access to social services and treatment) must be sited and built for the chronically homeless, as promised by Measure HHH — in all parts of the city, not just where the backlash will be weakest. To this end, city politicians (who have control over land-use

policies) must lead rather than be led by a vocal minority of obstructionist constituents. At the same time, for the region’s “economically homeless,” the state’s broader housing crisis must be addressed by new laws and incentives that encourage construction, especially of subsidized affordable housing. For the good of the city itself, short-term needs must be weighed against long-term solutions and officials must find the right balance between managing the homelessness problem and eradicating it.

The rights of people living on the streets must be protected and bal-

anced against the needs of the city.

In the world’s richest nation, homelessness on this scale should be shameful and shocking. But most Angelenos are no longer either shocked or shamed. Increasingly, we are uncomfortable, irritated, disgusted, scared or oblivious. Compassion is being replaced by resignation.

It is imperative that we act now so that we don’t wake up in five, 10 or 20 years wondering where we were or what we could possibly have been thinking or why we kept quiet and did nothing as this unconscionable catastrophe took hold.

<http://www.latimes.com/opinion/editorials/>

UMCOR Sunday on March 11th

On Sunday, March 11th, La Tijera UMC will participate in UMCOR Sunday, formerly, One Great Hour of Sharing.

For more than 70 years, the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) has brought relief and hope to

communities both at home and abroad in the wake of disaster.

100% of all monies given to UMCOR go directly to relief. Methodists all over the world participate in One Great Hour of Sharing each year to support UMCOR’s work.

Through our support of One Great Hour of Sharing, we help pay for UMCOR’s overhead so that 100% of donations go directly to relief efforts. Without our offerings, UMCOR would not exist.

Our gifts on One Great Hour of Sharing go towards the global relief efforts of UMCOR. Help us make a difference!

La Tijera United Methodist Church

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**A Bead and a Prayer Workshop on
March 24th—Maundy Thursday
Worship & Dinner on March 28th—
Good Friday Ecumenical Service on
March 29th—Easter Sunday on
April 1st—Woo Hoo!!!**

**We are a Reconciling church!
ALL are welcome here.**



From Lyda . . .

There are times when the problems of the world seem too big to handle. We sign petitions, donate to worthy causes, and sometimes, we even show up at protests . . . but tangible evidence of much needed changes or help or awareness can seem very slow in coming. In the United Methodist Church alone, many of us have been advocating to remove our Book of Discipline's (UMC governing laws) discriminatory and hate-filled language regarding LGBTQ clergy and the ban on same-gender weddings SINCE THE 1970's!!! But . . . we are a Reconciling Church, and although change in the UMC is not here yet, we continue to following Jesus and worship a God of inclusive love.

Another daunting challenge that we are facing both as a faith community and individually is the epidemic of homelessness right here in Westchester. The sky-high costs of renting an apartment, the lack of services offered in this area, and the recent clearing out of Manchester

Square (Los Angeles' largest collection of homeless camps outside the 50 square blocks of skid row) have all added horrifically to the already overwhelming homelessness crisis in Los Angeles. We feed those we can, help people find services, and work with PATH (People Assisting the Homeless) but we want to do more—but what can a small group of people do that will really bring about change and offer hope?

Safe Parking. Safe Parking LA is a program which offers a transitional safe refuge for people and families living in their vehicles. Case management is performed with the intent of getting more services for the vehicle dweller and eventually getting them off the street and into housing.

We may be a small congregation, but we have a big parking lot—we are working towards becoming a Safe Parking LA site this year.

All applicants admitted into Safe Parking are fully screened, including being

screened in the National Sex Offender database. The LAPD and the city council, including our own Mike Bonin who represents our area as City Councilman, are behind the Safe Parking program 100%. In places where Safe Parking has been implemented, vandalism has been reduced significantly. Safe Parking is a win-win for the entire community.

Change can happen. Answers and hope can be found. As a people of faith, we are ready to step up and be a part of the solution—and become a Safe Parking site. We are still working with our D.S. Mark Nakagawa, Safe Parking LA and our Councilman Mike Bonin, but we are moving forward!

Mike Bonin & Pastor Lyda

