



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 11

Nov. 2025



Pastor Darren

PASTOR'S PONDERINGS: "Waiting"

'Waiting' is an interesting concept, at least it seems to be these days. My images of waiting from years ago involved needing rides and not having a cell phone. We didn't always have these tech boxes in our pockets, so you might end up waiting a bit. It was kind of how it worked; life moved a little differently. Today there really aren't times that I'm waiting anymore. That's just cell phone time. I have a couple of sports and puzzle sites I like. And there's always social media. Yeah, we don't wait, we just take scroll time, mostly. Our worship series for November is about this time in the Christian year where we're waiting. We're waiting until we can get to Advent... the season of waiting. So, we're waiting to wait... if that makes sense.

It is an interesting thing to consider, though. We spend a lot of time in our culture looking for ways to eliminate waiting. We get online for a lot of our shopping. It helps us to avoid the waiting, the crowds, the bustle. We order early from the coffee shop so we can just go in and grab it. It's good, too - the dangers of human inaction, and all. The other day I asked a person how he was doing. He had the nerve to tell me! Doesn't he know? "How are you?" is just something you say! Sarcasm aside, I do wonder what would happen if we looked at waiting in a different way. With more intentionality, waiting can become a time to anticipate, maybe even to prepare.

The Advent series is called "Surely the Days are Coming." It's a journey through some lesser-known texts in the Old Testament. They help us to look at the value of taking that time to envision what lies ahead. What is it that's coming? How will we be challenged? How might we be blessed? I trust our time together will be blessed this month!

A Word from the Finance Team...

Thanks to everyone for your heart and time during stewardship month. We've been navigating a nuanced message to the congregation. Things are good and growing. God is clearly with us and our UMCWV ministries. But we are not yet right-sized financially.

We've been living in faith that the church would respond and it has. After Pledge Sunday we have 49 pledges for 2026. Over half of those have upped their pledge from this year. So, this is good news indeed.

Returning pledge cards will continue through the next month or so, and we fully expect to reach last year's 69 pledges - and maybe even more. If you haven't yet had the opportunity to turn in your pledge, you can do so in the Sunday offering plate or the church office during the week. There are pledge cards in the Narthex and the church office.

Once again, we thank God for the inspiration and guidance. We thank you for your response.

Peace and Grace,

The Days Are
Surely Coming

Good Questions Have
Small Groups Talking

Josh Hunt



Advent Book Study!

Coming soon, "The Days are Surely Coming."

You can purchase the book on Amazon for \$7.99 or in the church office for \$10.

The office will order 10 books. This hybrid study will in person and on Zoom.

Set your clocks
1 Hour
Fall Back
Sat Nov 2 at 2 a.m.

MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS

Carol Ames, Communications Team Coordinator

Before the first Sunday of October, the **Women's Ministries Retreat** was held in Alton Hall with Rev. Melissa MacKinnon as the guest speaker. She is the former District Superintendent of the Cal-Pac UMC's North District and is now the Director of Change for the Conference. The theme for the day was *All About Prayer* and was enjoyed by about 20 women (*some of whom had to leave before the group photo was taken*). Each participant was given Anglican wooden prayer beads with a cross, rich with Christian symbolism, after instructions were discussed about different ways to use them when praying. (*Melissa is holding one in the photo.*)



Women's Retreat on Oct. 4

As everyone should realize by now, October was **Stewardship Month** at UMCWV and the theme **People Get Ready** was used, with sub-titles for each week. Oct. 5 was **World Communion Sunday** and Pastor Darren's message was **Ready to Change**, like the colors of fall leaves on the title slide. Candice was the liturgist and Charissa had a **Word for Kids** before they went to Sunday School. In today's culture, it's being said that people are coming back to church – looking for something Godly, so are we ready to welcome them and become what they're looking for?



Worship on Oct. 5, World Communion Sunday

People Get Ready is the title of a song originally sung by The Impressions, with lead singer and its composer Curtis Mayfield, in 1965. Many others have recorded it since then, including Rod Stewart and Jeff Beck. It uses the **metaphor of a train** to represent hope for a better future, as it was written during the Civil Rights Movement. That's why there was a replica train with photos of church members, and Pastor Darren as the conductor, in front of the altar all month. On Oct. 12, retired UMC Pastor Lanny Arrowsmith gave the message while the Cowdrey family was on the East Coast for the wedding of Joseph & Maddy. Titled **Ready and Grateful**, it was about gratitude that, Lanny said, is stewardship – saying thank you for blessings and kindness received. Let the ripples flow from you to others as you willingly pay your gratitude forward. Donna, Katy (and Kiki) shared in leadership and liturgist roles, and Charles gave a stewardship moment. In the photo collage the children in Sunday School are waving to the people on the train.



Worship on Oct. 12

Several people from the congregation (*photos on next page of only a few*) attended the **Bowls of Hope** fundraiser for **Many Mansions**. UMCWV was one of several founding organizations of Many Mansions in 1979. Church members continue in leadership roles: Rick Schroeder as President & CEO, Doug Menges as Executive Director, and Nancy Moravec and Chris Soltow on the Board of Directors.

The 21st Annual Bowls of Hope was held on Oct. 12 at Momentum, using the publicity tagline:

From Empty Bowls to Hopeful Homes.



Bowls of Hope on Oct. 12

Laity Sunday was celebrated during worship on Oct. 19 when Jeanie, as Lay Leader, related the many ways that this year's honorees have served our church in volunteer roles. *Congratulations to Candice & John Shehorn!* John was also the liturgist that day and Kallie gave the Stewardship Moment. Charissa's *Word for Kids* was about being peace-makers. As Pastor Darren's message about being **Ready to Dig in** becomes more needed in our community, we need to be persistent in preaching the challenge of faith, by being mindful and not losing heart. "Everyone is going through something," and we want to bless each other in the journey of life, especially in tough times.



Worship on Oct. 19

As part of Stewardship Month, a **financial Town Hall** was held in Alton Hall after worship on Oct. 19. Approximately 40 people attended to hear reports and get a sense of the church's financial picture for the end of 2025 and the budget going into 2026. Where the church stands for next year really depends on the results of pledges turned in as soon as possible, which greatly helps the finance committee plan for the

future. Everyone was encouraged to increase their giving for 2026 by as much as they can, even if only a small amount.



Town Hall on Oct. 19

Humble...and Ready was Pastor Darren's message for the last Sunday of Stewardship Month, Oct. 26. Are we ready to be in step with God and really ready to follow Jesus? Our mindset is important, as even the tax collector knew he needed God. When we can align with God, we can carry value for others, so we need to be humble and open to how God is speaking to us. Sunday School had fun Halloween activities planned and the kids were invited to wear costumes if they wanted. Actually, with the Dodgers being in the World Series starting that day, even some adults wore a costume. During a *Word for Kids*, Charissa talked about God writing love on our hearts and passed out candy hearts. Jeanie was the liturgist, and the Chancel Choir and Covenant Ringers both presented special music.



Worship on Oct. 26

Following worship and Sunday School, the kids had fun playing Halloween games and **Trick or Treat-ing** at different tables set up in Alton Hall. The adults enjoyed helping with those activities or watching the kids in their costumes - as well as having treats on the patio, provided by the Hospitality Committee. *Note: Pastor Darren added the rest of his Dodger's uniform "costume" before joining the people in Alton Hall.*



Trick or Treat Activities in Alton Hall, Oct. 26

The Growing Place Preschool had a pumpkin patch for the children to enjoy on 10/22 & 23, right here at UMCWV. The pumpkins this year were donated by Conejo Family Farms in Camarillo - *thank you!* Each child had the opportunity to pick out a pumpkin to take home! There was also a great set up for a photo op on the Youth Building lawn.



The Growing Place Pumpkin Patch on the Youth Building Lawn - Miss Karen and three students

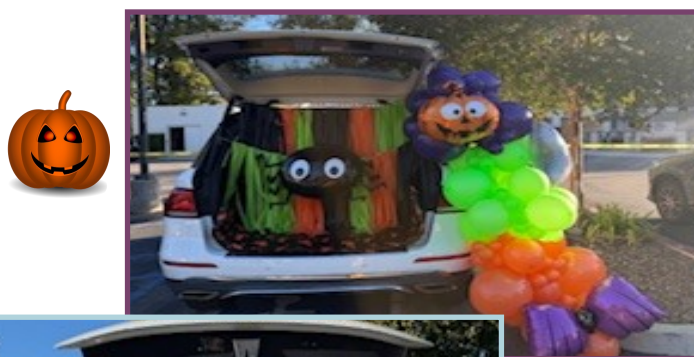
Growing Place Preschool Halloween fun!



Happy
Halloween



The Growing Place Preschool's Halloween tradition of a "Trunk or Treat" event in the parking lot was on Oct. 30. Parents decorate their car trunks and the children collect candy from each trunk! There are some very creative parents!



STEWARDSHIP 2026 PLEDGE CARD

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH WESTLAKE VILLAGE
ESTIMATE OF GIVING CARD 2026

Stewardship: *People get Ready!*

I will stand with the church Today...And Tomorrow with this gift to the

Annual Operating Budget:

\$_____ per week, month, quarter, year. (circle one.)

I will also step forward and help our congregation better cover our

Apportionment & Benevolence obligation with a **second, additional pledge:**

\$_____ per week, month, quarter, year. (circle one.)

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____ Phone _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

This commitment may be revised or cancelled at any time at my request.

FOR YOUR RECORDS

My support for our ministries for 2026 is

Annual Operating Budget:

\$_____ per week,
month, quarter, year. (circle one.)

Apportionment & Benevolence:

\$_____ per week,
month, quarter, year. (circle one.)



Stewardship 2026 continues! If you have not yet pledged, above is the 2026 pledge card, if you need one. There are pledge cards in the Narthex and in the church office. You may also pledge by emailing your information to the church office: Vinia@umcwv.org. Whether this is your first time pledging or you have been pledging for years, know that your pledge is essential in helping the church develop an attainable budget for 2026!

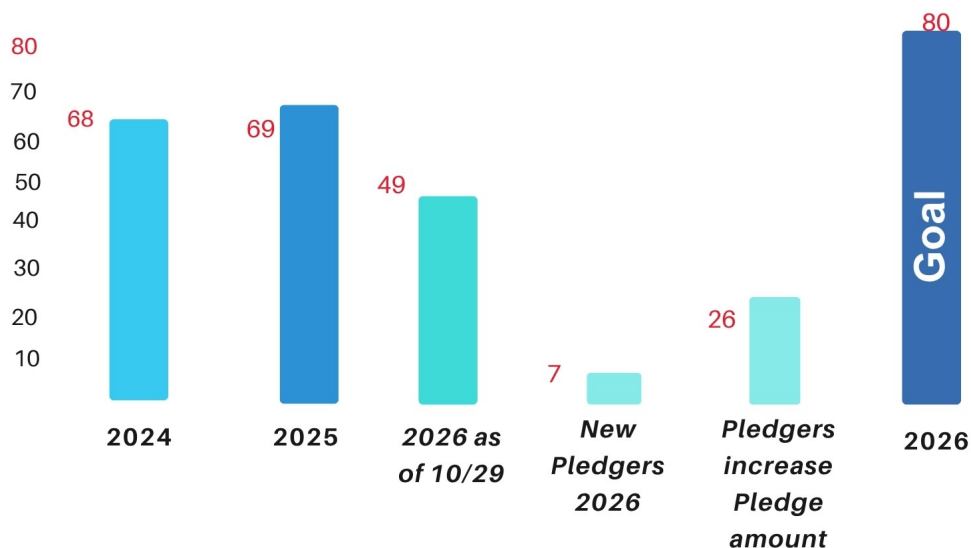
A pledge is meant as an Estimate of your Giving and may be revised or cancelled by request at any time, if needed.

Support the ministries of the United Methodist Church Westlake Village



Stewardship 2026

Stewardship Progress and Goal



All Saints Sunday - Nov. 2

Honoring loved ones who have passed during the last year,



First Aid/ CPR
Training - \$25
In the BKR

**Mon 11/3 7 p.m. &
Sat 11/15 10 a.m.**

To RSVP: Email Carol Ames
irngsng@gmail.com

There are 3 people signed up for each of these classes, as of 10/30/25. The information in this class is good for **everyone** to know, and is open to all in the congregation.

EMT Matthew Christie from the LA Fire Dept. is the teacher and would appreciate having at least 5 people in each class.

Certification is good for 2 years, and \$25 is a special rate Matt gives to the church. You pay him at the class, by cash or check.

Sign up now!



Happy Veterans Day

Church Office closed
Tue Nov. 11



"O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever..."
Psalms 107:1

Happy Thanksgiving!
The Church office will be closed Thurs 11/27 and Fri 11/28 for the Thanksgiving Holiday!
Be safe and enjoy!

Conejo Valley Interfaith Thanksgiving Service

Sunday Nov. 23, 2025
At Temple Adat Elohim
Reform Temple of the Conejo Valley
2420 E. Hillcrest Dr.
Thousand Oaks, Ca
(805) 497-7101



UMCWV
Hanging of the Greens
Sat 11/29 9 A.M. meet on Church Patio

There will coffee, juice and light breakfast foods before we get started! Fun for the whole family

Women's Ministries

Soups & pie lunch

Sponsored By Women' Ministry

Nov. 9 after the service in
Alton Hall - \$15 Adult \$5
children

Email Candice if you can bring soup or a pie. cshehorn0821@gmail.com

Crafty Ladies Patio Sale

CRAFTY LADIES' PATIO SALE

SUNDAY

NOV. 9 AFTER SERVICE

Fall and holiday decor items & Lots more!!

Christmas Music at UMCWV

Christmas Concert & Advent Celebration

Enjoy the singing of carols and
music presented by all of our choirs

December 7 4:00–6:00p.m.

Dinner Served in Alton Hall at 5:15pm

Following the ceremonial lighting
of the outdoor nativity scene

To go with the lasagna dinner on 12/7, if your last name begins with A-N, please bring a salad or side dish. If your last name begins with O-Z, please bring a dessert. Cathie Loeb will send out a sign-up Genius email for you to let her know what you will bring.

“The Living Light”

UMCWV Chancel Choir
presents this dramatic musical
experience by Ruth Elaine Schram
during the 10 a.m. service Dec. 14th

Presentation will be accompanied by
small orchestra of woodwinds, strings,
piano & percussion.

NOV/DEC MISSION MOMENT – CHRISTMAS GIFT MARKET



Christmas will be here before you know it! Let us help you get a start on your holiday shopping.

UMCWV's annual Christmas Gift Market opens on Sunday, Nov. 9 and the Missions Committee is excited about some of the new offerings! While **Westminster Free Clinic** and **Heifer International** are still included, there also some new opportunities for you to *Give Where You Live!*

New this year:

Vicky's Scholarship Fund (Many Mansions) - While Many Mansions provides affordable housing in Ventura Co., this fund awards its residents an opportunity to go to college or pursue vocational training by providing scholarships to graduating seniors and hard-working parents. Since it's inception, it has awarded scholarships totaling \$250,000. This past June, 42 recipients were awarded scholarships to uplift their dreams and ambitions.

Meals on Wheels (Senior Concerns) - For 50 years, Senior Concerns has provided home delivered meals, both hot and cold, to seniors in our community who are unable to cook and shop for themselves, along with a friendly check-in by volunteers who deliver the meals.

NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) - This organization is dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness. It provides resources, support and advocacy. For each donation made, you will receive a card and insert describing the organization. These cards make wonderful gifts for family, friends, and colleagues.

Starting Nov. 9 and running through Christmas, someone will be available on the patio after church to take your order and answer questions . We look forward to seeing you!

Also, be sure to put Dec. 14 on your calendar. On the patio after worship that day, there will be the new **Mistletoe Marketplace** (formerly known as *Super Sale*), with ornaments, gift tags, baked goods and more!
All donations on that Sunday will go to support Church World Service.

Give the Gift of Hope this Christmas!



**Non-perishable food
drop off available
every Sunday!**



Christmas Gift Market 2025 Shopping List – HOPE FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Look over the new shopping list and see how you can send Hope for the Holidays this Christmas!

Shop at the Missions table on the patio every Sunday after church beginning 11/9/2025 through Christmas. Or mail in your list and number of cards requested with your check made payable to UMCWV (memo line CGM). We will put your order together for pick-up at the table on the following Sunday. You may also pay online by going to Donations on the umcwv.org website and scrolling down to Christmas Gift Market.

Give Where You Live:

Westminster Free Clinic: Westminster Free Clinic is a local, nonprofit healthcare provider offering uninsured adults and children health services by volunteer professionals and youth interns.

Quantity: _____ \$25 - Donation will help provide medical supplies. **Total \$ _____**

Senior Concerns' Meals on Wheels: Meals on Wheels provides hot and cold meals for seniors in our community who are unable to shop and cook for themselves.

Quantity: _____ \$25 - Donation will provide 6 meals **Total \$ _____**

NAMI: National Alliance on Mental Health (Ventura Co) provides mental health help and resources

Quantity: _____ \$25 - Donation will help ensure crucial help is received. **Total \$ _____**

Vicky's Scholarship Fund: Many Mansions provides affordable housing and the scholarship fund awards their resident high school graduates and hard working parents financial help in reaching their dreams.

Quantity: _____ \$25 - Donation will go toward scholarships in 2026. **Total \$ _____**

Give Hope Around the World with HEIFER INTERNATIONAL:

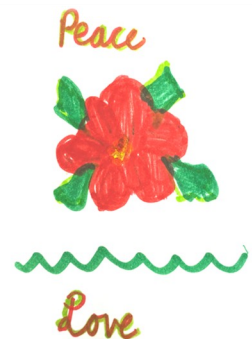
Quantity: _____	\$ 5 for a share of bees/\$30 for a package	Total \$ _____
_____	\$10 for a share of sheep/\$120 for one	\$ _____
_____	\$10 for a share of a pig/\$120 for one	\$ _____
_____	\$10 for a share of a goat/\$120 for one	\$ _____
_____	\$ 20 for a flock of chicks	\$ _____
_____	\$ 50 for a share of a heifer/\$500 for one	\$ _____

NAME: _____ **TOTAL FOR ALL GIFTS \$ _____**

Paid by Check # _____ Paid by Cash _____ Paid online _____



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HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

BIEDEBACH, David & Alina 11/08
 BONDS, Tim & Nancy 11/08
 FREEMAN, David & Carol 11/20
 THEBAUD, Larry & Roz 11/25



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

SOLTOW, Chris 11/01
 COMPARATO, Sara 11/02
 BORING, Jack 11/08
 HARWIG, SueLynn 11/08
 DEHAVEN, Jean 11/10
 BORING, Anna 11/12
 STUART, Greg 11/18
 SUTPHEN, Pam 11/21
 BIRMINGHAM, Charissa 11/26
 STONE, Amy 11/26



Finance Corner

TREASURER'S REPORT

Sept 2025 Income:
 \$61,906
 Sept 2025 Expenses:
 \$55,797
 Fiscal YTD Income:
 \$401,449
 Fiscal YTD Expenses:
 \$469,680

ATTENDANCE

		In-Person	YouTube	Total
Sept	7	110	53	163
Sept	14	100	65	165
Sept	21	91	34	125
Sept	28	103	59	162

September YouTube totals were taken as of 10/30/2025.

- Q.** Why does pledging matter to our church? How is that different from donating whatever and whenever I can?
- A.** It is a vital tool in the process of developing and managing a healthy church budget. A pledge card (regardless the amount) says, "I am a part of something larger than myself." When you pledge, you create for yourself a mechanism of accountability. You empower your church to empower you.

Many Mansions Holiday Helper



Give a Gift of Joy – Help make the holidays magical for a child in need! Select a toy from our [most requested gifts](#) or shop with ease through our [Amazon gift list](#) and have the gift shipped directly to us.

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 HistorianCarol Ames

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEES

Communications:.....Carol Ames
Finance:John Shehorn
Foundation:Don Phillipson
Nominations:Pastor Darren
Staff Parish Relations:.....Cindy Faccone
StewardshipJohn Shehorn
TrusteesCandice Shehorn (interim)

PROGRAMMATIC COMMITTEES

Christian Education.....Amy Comparato
Growing Place.....Tom Sutphen
Conejo ConnectRick Schroeder
Membership Care.....Jeanie Severance
Membership Growth
Missions CommitteeCathie Loeb
Music Committee.....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
GeneralNancy Moravec



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
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C

Cindy Faccone, chair
Doug Menges
Polly Tattersall Martin

2025

Roz Thebaud
Candi Wilcox

2026

Janet Todd
Wayne Loeb
Phyllis Marbach

2027

COVENANT DEADLINE
For December is Noon November 15

Senior Pastor: Rev. Darren Cowdrey
revdarren.umcww@gmail.com

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

Administrative Director: Vinia Pavlath
viniaumcww@gmail.com

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 Sunday Music: 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 from our website or on YouTube.*

*Check the 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