





**WOODBURY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

4 Church Street  
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Find us on /woodburyumcct & /woodburyumcct



Rev. J. Michael Cobb, Pastor

# Woodbury United Methodist Messenger

Thursday, April 14, 2022

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## April 17<sup>th</sup>: Easter Sunday

**Lectionary Readings:**

**Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24**

**Gospel Lesson: Luke 24:1-12**

**Liturgist and Communion Steward: Anne Burke**

**Ushers & Greeters: Barbara Etcheto, Mark Davis, JoAnn and Bud Behlman**

**Audio Visual Technician: Theron Kissinger**

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### MAUNDY THURSDAY – APRIL 14

Communion Service at 7:00 p.m.

### ECUMENICAL GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE – APRIL 15

Worship Service at 7:00 p.m.

St. Paul's Episcopal Church

### EASTER SUNDAY – APRIL 17

**Community Sunrise Service 7:00 AM @ the Hollow – Woodbury, CT**  
followed by fellowship, coffee and donut holes

#### **Continental Breakfast at WUMC**

Fellowship Hall beginning at 9:00 a.m.

Sponsored by Family Nurture Ministry Team

**10:30 a.m. Traditional Easter Worship Service**

## Worship At 10:30 AM, Livestreaming or In Person

- **Video:** Go to <http://www.woodburyumc.net>, scroll to the link for livestreaming near the top of our home page. A link is also provided for archived videos for later viewing.
  - **Audio only by phone:** dial 425-436-6391, enter pin with hash sign 2431819#. Note that these numbers have changed from what was previously used. Please mute your phones to eliminate background noise.
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## Schedule For This Week

<b>Tuesday, April 19th</b>	Church Council, 7 PM
<b>Wednesday, April 20th</b>	Bell Choir Rehearsal, 6:00 PM, Sanctuary Voice Choir Rehearsal, 7:15 PM, Sanctuary
<b>Saturday, April 23rd</b>	Confirmation Retreat, 9 AM—4 PM, Fellowship Hall
<b>Monday, April 25th</b>	Missions and Outreach, 7 PM
<b>Saturday, April 30th</b>	Woodbury Earth Day 2022, Hollow Park
<b>Sunday, May 1st</b>	CT District Conference, 3:30 PM, via Zoom

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## The Latest from the COVID Response Team (CRT)

**Updated 4-April-2022:** We are delighted to announce, starting immediately, that masks are optional during worship services, although we still encourage members of our congregation, who have not been vaccinated, to wear a mask. Further, pre-registration for church services is no longer required.

Please continue to maintain social distancing between different family units and refrain from attending services in person if you or a family member has been ill (e.g., have any cold, flu or COVID symptom). You will find a chart on our website at <https://woodburyumc.net/covid-recovery%2Freopening> to help you determine when it is safe to return to in-person worship after being ill or having been in close contact with someone else who is ill.

We will continue to livestream services, which are available online at our website, [www.woodburyumc.net](http://www.woodburyumc.net), or our YouTube channel at [http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCN-kkokTCbVE9urwgP\\_AEcw](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCN-kkokTCbVE9urwgP_AEcw).

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## The Prayer Corner

*In prayer, please remember: the people of Ukraine; the following individuals from the WUMC Congregation: Michael Etcheto, grandson of Barbara Etcheto, Lou Calabrese (husband of Lynn Ramsden-Calabrese); Bob and Martha Asman, Linda Bailey; **Our Confirmands:** Annabelle Cloud, Cody & Zachary Cordova, James Levario, and Matthew Shupenis. If you would like our confidential prayer team to pray with you or for you, please reach out to Carolyn Shay, 203-518-3177 or [1jerseygirl52@gmail.com](mailto:1jerseygirl52@gmail.com)*

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## Woodbury UMC To Participate In Woodbury Earth Day 2022

Calling all volunteers! The WUMC will be participating in the Woodbury Earth Day 2022 at Hollow Park on **Saturday, April 30 from 11-4 PM**. Our United Methodist denomination has a long history of environmental advocacy and concrete action, rooted in our understanding that our faith demands that we be good, proactive stewards of the earth. **We will need several people to set up, man and dismantle our booth** on the day of the event. Even more importantly we need everyone to bring in their recyclables. **We are collecting clean clear plastic water bottles, paper towel rolls and toilet paper rolls NOW to use in making children's art.** Please find the bin near the check in area to make your donations! See Meg Temple for details.

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## FINAL WEEK TO GIVE: El Prado, Ecuador: Sharing the Vision

Throughout the Lenten Season we have been receiving a special offering for the community of El Prado, Ecuador. For years the Methodist Church there has been ministering to the community in a borrowed space at a local farm. Much of that ministry has taken place in a stable and storage areas. The Methodist Church in El Prado has a vision of building their own church and community center to continue their ministry, especially with the women and children there. To that end they are seeking to raise \$20,000. Our offerings over the past 6 weeks will be sent to our General Board of Global Ministries Missionary in Ecuador, Sara Flores, so we can share in the vision of a growing presence of the Risen Christ in El Prado.



This Resurrection Sunday, as we celebrate the Risen Christ here in Woodbury, we ask you to consider Sharing the Vision with the people of El Prado and leaving a gift in one of the Ecuador tote bags at the front or rear of the sanctuary.

Thank You.

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## Answering Your Questions about Impending Change in the UMC

*On March 20<sup>th</sup>, WUMC held a meeting after worship to discuss the various changes and challenges facing the United Methodist denomination. Many of these changes are related to LGBTQ ordination and marriage, many of them involve questions of scriptural authority, and many of them have to do with how the church is structured and organized. While Pastor Michael answered as many questions as possible as completely as possible, many of these concerns deserve more detailed explanation and reference to source materials for those interested in doing their own further research. This article is part of an ongoing series intended for that purpose.*

One person noted their understanding that much of the disagreement around LGBTQ issues was a cultural difference between United Methodists within the United States (who would be more progressive) and United Methodists outside of the United States, and in Africa in particular (who would be against LGBTQ rights). This person pointed this out as part of the framing of their question: ***Was the global part of the church responsible for the way the general conference voted in February 2019?*** In response, I noted that the breakdown of who tends to believe what in the UMC is far more complicated and far more nuanced than that, and that I strongly encourage us to be careful about a simple US values vs African values comparison, or any framing that supports colonialist or prejudiced thinking.

The most prominent example of this is The Christmas Covenant. Below is a FAQ on the Christmas Covenant, explaining in some detail that it is a plan for



EQUITY. RESPECT. MUTUALITY.

**The Christmas Covenant**  
an equitable structure of global regionalism

[www.christmascovenant.com](http://www.christmascovenant.com)  
[www.facebook.com/christmascovenant](https://www.facebook.com/christmascovenant)  
[christmascovenant@gmail.com](mailto:christmascovenant@gmail.com)

denominational unity written primarily by United Methodists from Africa, Europe and the Philippines. I share this with you for several reasons.

One, you will see that this plan “encourages regional conferences to consider ministry approaches that reflect the theological convictions of the missional contexts they serve.” In other words, different parts of the global church can come to different conclusions on ministry with and for LGBTQ people, with no interest in controlling United States UMC polity on LGBTQ people, while preserving denominational unity.

Two, note that much of this proposal is about restructuring the world church. **LGBTQ issues are NOT the driving factor**—denominational structure and decision-making authority are at least, if not more important.

Three, note in point three below that all major legislative proposals to “dissolve or dismember the UMC” came from the United States. The global church is NOT who is leading the push for any of the changes facing the denomination, whether dissolution, disaffiliation, or creating a new denomination—those actions have been led from Americans.

Much more information is available at [christmascovenant.com](http://christmascovenant.com), from which all of this material was sourced.

When the General Conference does meet again, the Christmas Covenant is one of the major pieces of legislation it will consider. However, that is at least two years away, and the impending launch of the Global Methodist Church (GMC) will trigger many additional actions that will happen in the meantime, making its future highly uncertain.

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### **What is the Christmas Covenant?**

The Christmas Covenant is a set of legislation and constitutional amendments submitted to the United Methodist Church’s (UMC) General Conference with the goal of establishing regional equity in the structures of the church for missional effectiveness while sustaining connectional unity. It is rooted in the following values:

- Connectional relationships rooted in mission
- Respect for contextual ministry settings
- Legislative equality for regional bodies of the church

### **Why is it called the Christmas Covenant?**

The legislation was conceived during the Christmas season of 2019. Christmas is an auspicious time for Methodists as it reminds us of the Christmas Conference of 1784 that gave birth to the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States, one of the original predecessor bodies of the UMC. Proponents pray that the Christmas Covenant would be a rallying point for a renewed and revived UMC around the world.

### **What is the context that gave birth to the Christmas Covenant?**

Soon after the special General Conference of 2019, proposals to dissolve or dismember the UMC proliferated. All these major legislative proposals emanated from the United States. The African College of Bishops issued a statement on maintaining the unity and integrity of the UMC. The Philippines’ College of Bishops also released a pastoral letter that spoke against the dissolution of the UMC. Proponents of the Christmas Covenant who are from Central Conferences saw this as the “kairos” moment – an opportune time for voices from Central Conferences to be heard. Rooted in a lamentation of how colonialism has shown itself in efforts to divide the church without hearing from the silenced margins of Central Conferences, and harming its mission work, the Christmas Covenant was born – a gift of hope from those in the grassroots for the future of our global connection.

### **What is the vision that inspired the Christmas Covenant?**

In its preamble, proponents declare: “We envision a Church that connects globally, engages in mission together, respects contextual ministry settings, celebrates the diversity of God’s creation in its many beautiful expressions, and values mutually empowering relationships in order to strengthen our core mission of evangelism, discipleship, and social witness for the transformation of the world.”

### **How does the Christmas Covenant achieve this?**

The Christmas Covenant achieves regional equity by transforming Central Conferences to Regional Conferences. The change in name will undo the negative connotation associated with the term “Central” (i.e. the Central Jurisdiction segregated Black

churches and clergy in the United States). The proposed constitutional amendments will strengthen the ability of Regional Conferences to adapt the Book of Discipline to meet the unique missional needs of each region. The Christmas Covenant also creates the United States Regional Conference with regional equity and structure (as proposed by The Connectional Table) and authorizes contextual adaptations of the Book of Discipline for missional effectiveness.

### **Why the Christmas Covenant?**

We are stronger together. Being in mission together as a global church celebrates our unity in diversity and positively impacts the different contexts we represent. While diversity is a challenge, we do not believe dissolution is the right way to heal the wounds that cause us pain as Christ's Body. A truly global church committed to be in mission together embraces its differences and allows for self-determination. It is able to find common ground in affirming how we do effective ministry in places we serve. Acknowledging that our different contexts need different solutions is a better way forward and fosters mutuality. This path affirms a stronger common witness to the global community. God's grace is present everywhere and in everyone. We are called to humbly respond to this grace in recognizing its many expressions around the world. This call we do best together.

### **Who wrote the Christmas Covenant?**

The Christmas Covenant legislation was written primarily by United Methodists from Africa, Europe and the Philippines. In February, 2020 it was passed by the Philippines Annual Conference - Cavite and submitted to the next General Conference. The Connectional Table (CT) affirms the Christmas Covenant as an "expression of the CT's commitment to institutional equity and to dismantling historic, systemic colonialism." (CT press release, Nov. 3, 2020)

### **Why the Regional Conferences?**

The various geographical regions of the UMC, sharing closely related ministry context, will benefit from an opportunity to engage in conversations related to the life and ministry of the church within their respective regions, while maintaining missional and connectional relationships with other regions. The Christmas Covenant celebrates the Connectional Table's U.S. Regional Conference legislation (which Central Conference bishops have affirmed), making it an integral part of the Christmas Covenant legislation, and takes this regionalization effort to the level of the entire UMC Connection. This offers United Methodists in all regions of the UMC, the space to engage in context-specific conversations for each region that otherwise would have been brought to the General Conference. United Methodists at General Conference can then focus their time to meaningfully consider matters related to global Christian witness.

### **What happens if the Christmas Covenant is approved?**

The Christmas Covenant is a set of legislation that includes petitions which take immediate effect upon General Conference adjournment and upon approval and constitutional amendments that requires 2/3 approval at annual conferences. The Christmas Covenant endorses the creation of 5 episcopal areas in Africa, as recommended by the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters, to strengthen the ministry of the church. Upon adjournment of the General Conference, the US Regional Committee with legislative powers can convene. This will include all delegates to the General Conference from the United States of America and two representatives from each regional conference outside the US.

### **What is the future of the United Methodist Church if the Christmas Covenant is approved?**

The Christmas Covenant sustains the unity of the church and allows the church to continue with existing ministries. The Christmas Covenant authorizes a study to strengthen the work of regional conferences facilitated by the Connectional Table, Standing Committee on Central Conferences Matters (to be renamed Standing Committee on Regional Conference Matters Outside the US), and the new Standing Committee on US Matters.

### **What is the Christmas Covenant Stance on the Inclusion of LGBTQI persons?**

The Christmas Covenant legislation ensures that no regional conference can be forced to do anything against its will. No regional conference can impose on any other regional conference. Recognizing the sacred value of all persons as created in the image of God, the Christmas Covenant encourages regional conferences to consider ministry approaches that reflect the theological convictions of the missional contexts they serve.

### **Is the Christmas Covenant in conflict with the Protocol of Reconciliation and Grace Through Separation?**

No. These are two separate pieces of legislation focused on two different things. While the Protocol has "regionalization" as one of its pillars, it does not have proposed legislation to make that happen. The Protocol is an amicable separation proposal. The Christmas Covenant is about the future of a vital UMC engaged in effective mission work rooted in mutuality,

interdependence, and respect for the missional contexts of each regional conference it seeks to establish. The Christmas Covenant does not prevent any part of the UMC from leaving the denomination. There are already existing remedies in the Book of Discipline passed in 2019 that are available for churches that want to depart from the UMC.

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## **Parenting With Grace Is Coming**



Join us on April 22, 2022 @ 9:30 am  
via Zoom

*Parenting with Grace*

The mission of Parenting With Grace is to provide a community group where parents of children and youth of all ages and stages can meet regularly to connect with each other, discuss issues related to their needs, and receive parenting support and strategies from each other in a context of radical hospitality.

Housed by: Woodbury United Methodist Church

Co-facilitated by: Tara Beall-Gomes & Meg Temple

Vision Statement: parents, of all of abilities, gender identity(ies), sexual orientation, marital status, relationship status, family structure, age or income will feel loved, needed, included, supported and validated in a space that is physically, emotionally, spiritually and religiously safe and welcomed. All will be seen and heard.

tarabeallgomes15@gmail.com

We are very excited to announce that our new WUMC ministry, Parenting with Grace, will be holding its first meeting by Zoom on April 22 at 9:30 AM.

Parenting with Grace is a group offering fellowship and support to all parents and caregivers of children of all ages.

The group will be facilitated by Tara Beall-Gomes and Meg Temple. For more information, see Meg.

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**Save the Date:**  
**Sunday May 1, 2022**  
**3:30 PM via Zoom**  
**CT District Conference**



**Worship Leader**  
**Woodbury UMC Choir Director**  
**Mr. Chris Shay**

**Key Note Speaker**  
**Bishop Thomas Bickerton**

**Mini Concert Following the Conference!!!**  
Featuring Winner of The Voice 2012 Jeremiah Paul  
& West Haven First & Wesley UMC's Choir Director Christine Chan

WUMC is thrilled that our own Chris Shay has been chosen to lead the music for this year's Connecticut District Conference! The nearly 80 congregations in our district will get to see and hear what we have known for a long time: simply put, our music program is exceptional, and we are proud for so many people to experience our musicians firsthand.



These are some of the paintings produced by Mary Grace Styblo and Lydia Temple as part of their Sunflowers for Ukraine fundraiser.

See them on display in the church entryway starting on Easter Sunday.



# Sunflowers for Ukraine



Paintings of Ukraine's national flower,  
the sunflower and their national  
colors, Blue and yellow by Lydia  
Temple and Mary Grace Styblo

All proceeds will go to UMCOR's donations to  
help aid Ukraine

Pay what you want - \$15 minimum -

Sales began Easter Sunday

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Please contact Mary Grace at [mstyblo1@outlook.com](mailto:mstyblo1@outlook.com) or Lydia  
at [lydiatemple1@gmail.com](mailto:lydiatemple1@gmail.com) with any questions