



## WOODBURY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

4 Church Street  
Woodbury, CT 06798

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Find us on  /woodburyumcct &  /woodburyumcct



Rev. J. Michael Cobb, Pastor

# Woodbury United Methodist Messenger

Thursday, April 7, 2022

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## April 10<sup>th</sup>: Palm Sunday

**Lectionary Readings:**

**Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29**

**Gospel Lesson: Luke 19:28-40**

**Liturgist and Communion Steward: Ken Burke, Meg Temple**

**Ushers & Greeters: JoAnn and Bud Behlman**

**Audio Visual Technician: Theron Kissinger**

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### **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**

**Tuesday, April 12<sup>th</sup>**  
**Wednesday, April 13<sup>th</sup>**

Lenten Lectionary Bible Study, 6:30 PM, via Zoom

Lenten Lectionary Bible Study, noon

Bell Choir Rehearsal, 6:00 PM, Sanctuary

Voice Choir Rehearsal, 7:15 PM, Sanctuary

**Saturday, April 30<sup>th</sup>**

Woodbury Earth Day 2022, Hollow Park

**Sunday, May 1<sup>st</sup>**

CT District Conference, 3:30 PM, via Zoom

***The Easter Week schedule is on the next page.***

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# LENTEN CALENDAR

## PALM SUNDAY – APRIL 10

10:30 a.m. Worship Service

## 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**

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## UPDATE: COVID Response Team (CRT) Update

**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.

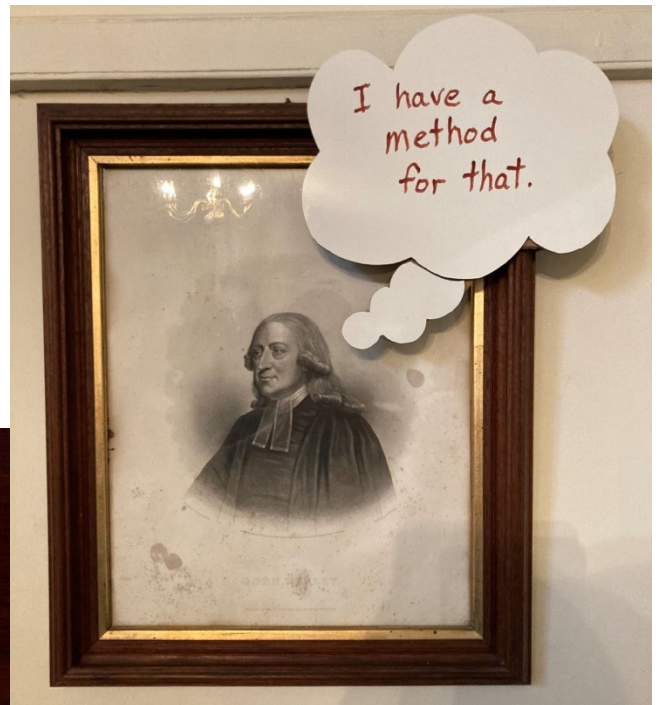
Please continue to maintain social distancing between different family units and refrain from attending services in person if you or a family member has been ill (e.g., have any cold, flu or COVID symptom). You will find a chart on our website at <https://woodburyumc.net/covid-recovery%2Freopening> to 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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## Narthex And Sanctuary Changes

Have you noticed a few changes recently in our Sanctuary, check-in area or narthex? A new ad hoc group is forming between Open Doors, Children & Youth Ministry, Trustees and Worship. The purpose of this group is to create a meaningful and engaging space and service for *all* worshippers. We currently do not have a children's program downstairs during worship. One way this group is working is to make changes in the sanctuary, narthex and check-in area that are engaging and inviting to children's and their families.

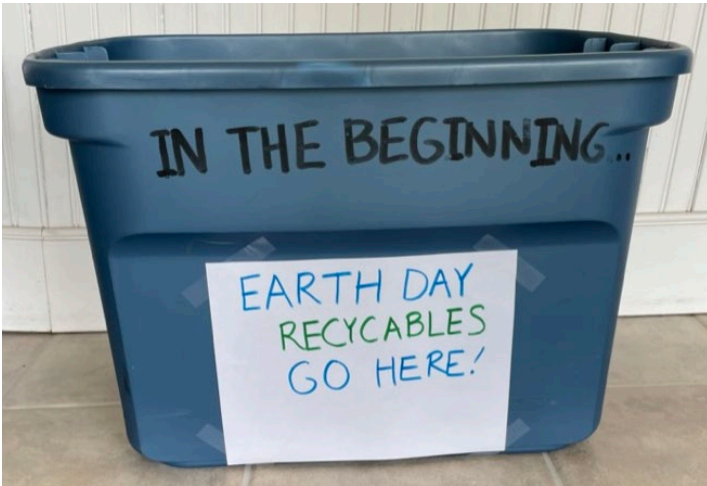


The most obvious change thus far is the coloring table for our youngest worshippers at the back of the sanctuary and the welcome bags for older children at the check-in table. We anticipate families visiting us during the Easter season and with the launch of our new parenting group, Parenting with Grace. One of our goals will be to update the narthex. While nothing has physically changed yet, we intend to use what we currently

have in that space to interact with families. You many have seen the recent thought bubble from the portrait of Rev. Gilbert. Expect to see fun facts next from John and Charles Wesley. If you have questions, please reach out to Meg Temple or Barb Hunt.

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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 p.m. 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 to use in making children's art beginning this Sunday, April 3.** Please find the bin near the check in area to make your donations! See Meg Temple for details.

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## Lenten Offering for Mission in Ecuador: Two Weeks Left!

During the season of Lent, the WUMC has been receiving a special offering each Sunday during worship to support the ministry of the Methodist Church in Ecuador. Since 2017 our church has been in a missional relationship with Sara Flores a missionary through the General Board of Global Ministry (GBGM). Last Sunday we heard from Sara via video and also from the people of the community of El Prado. In 2018 a team of 12 from our church went to Ecuador and spent time in the El Prado community sharing our prayers, our presence, our gifts, our service, and our witness with the people there, especially the children. At that time they were meeting in some of the buildings at a local farm. As was shared in the video on Sunday it is the dream of the community of El Prado to have their own space for a church and community center.



The money we raise from our Lenten offerings will go directly to support their effort. Currently their goal is to raise \$20,000, of which they have already raised \$5,000. May our giving bless the community of El Prado as we make their dream part of our dream of being Christ's body – Christ's Church – in the world.

You will continue to find two well-marked locations in the church where a gift can be left. Gifts can also be mailed to the church or donations can be made through the church's website. If a check is written please make it out to "WUMC" with "Ecuador" on the memo line.

Gracias – 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 had questions about pastors who perform same-sex weddings, saying that it seemed that they were just doing what they wanted, rather than following the rules as outlined in the *Book of Discipline*. In response, I noted that the language prohibiting officiating at same-sex weddings was in direct conflict with many other rules, creating a crisis. When faced with mutually exclusive rules, what is to be done?



Below is a statement that was presented and debated at the 2012 gathering of the New York Annual Conference (to which WUMC belongs) that goes into some detail describing this crisis<sup>1</sup>. It concludes that the NYAC affirms both same-sex marriage and ordination of LGBTQ people, and that doing so is consistent with positions taken since the early 1970s. This statement was voted on and affirmed by the 2012 NYAC Annual Conference. I offer it here as a detailed explanation both of why many UMC clergy have concluded that they have a moral and ethical responsibility to offer all ministry to all people, as well as documenting the decades-long affirmation of the rights of LGBTQ people that continues in the NYAC to this day.

## **Petition #2012-305 - The Spiritual Crisis Caused by the Requirement to Discriminate**

WHEREAS, in his "Letter from Birmingham Jail," Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. wrote "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly," and

WHEREAS, the nonviolent Civil Rights movement fought for justice and equality in civil and religious life in the United States with compassion and courage, yet injustice continues to threaten us in the United States and in The United Methodist Church, and

WHEREAS, the recognition of the full humanity, sacred worth and equal rights of gay and lesbian people is crucial to the civil rights struggle of our time, and

WHEREAS gay, lesbian and straight United Methodist laity and clergy are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny, and

WHEREAS, the continuing denial of full access to all the rights and privileges of church membership in The United Methodist Church is causing deep spiritual harm to our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters and is a threat to us all, and

WHEREAS, in his sermons "The New Birth" and "The Catholic Spirit," John Wesley taught that as long as we hold in common the essential elements of our faith, and as long as we unite in love, meaning that we love one another, that we commend each other to God in prayer, that we provoke each other to love and to good works, that we love each other not only in word but in deed and in truth, then our hearts are right and we should walk together hand in hand. Wesley further taught that differences of opinion ought not to tear this union of hearts asunder, and

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<sup>1</sup> Retrieved from [https://www.nyac.com/files/fileslibrary/2012-nyac\\_preconferencereports.pdf](https://www.nyac.com/files/fileslibrary/2012-nyac_preconferencereports.pdf) beginning on page 46.

WHEREAS, the forcible denial of rights and privileges to gay and lesbian persons through provisions in the *Book of Discipline* serves as shackles on pastoral care and ministry; and in their harshly punitive application these provisions of the *Discipline* are not only a grave injustice, they strike at our union in affection, challenge our ability to live amicably in disagreement, and violate the sacred command to love our neighbors as ourselves, and

WHEREAS, for over three decades the New York Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church has taken a stand calling for the inclusion of God's gay and lesbian children in the full life of the church. It has affirmed that "sexuality is God's good gift to all persons" and that the diversity of that gift should bar no one from answering the call to ministry, from recognition of her or his covenantal relationships, or from membership in the church community. It has gone on record in support of equal rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in civil society, and

WHEREAS, in taking these positions at annual conference meetings and in petitions from the Conference to the UMC's General Conferences, this annual conference has acted in opposition to the doctrinal prejudice and institutional discrimination enshrined in the UMC's *Book of Discipline*, and

WHEREAS, this annual conference intentionally and repeatedly embraced the name and mission of the "reconciling" movement. When the Judicial Council in 1999 prohibited conferences from labeling themselves as reconciling, our Conference passed a resolution accepting that position but also renewing its commitment and support for reconciling United Methodists and the Reconciling Congregations Program. It has explicitly and repeatedly rejected the national Church's assertion that homosexuality is "incompatible with Christian teaching," and

WHEREAS, in 1972 the General Conference of The United Methodist Church enacted legislation inserting into our *Book of Discipline* abusive mischaracterizations of gay persons and subsequently added punitive regulations restricting equality in The United Methodist Church, and at every General Conference in the last forty years the voices of those wounded by these words and regulations have been raised, and the demand for justice has been pressed, but hearts have remained hardened, and the *Discipline's* prejudice has remained unchanged, and

WHEREAS, in 1978 the clergy of the New York Annual Conference meeting in executive session stood in solidarity with a gay brother, Paul Abels, the first United Methodist pastor to come out, and over the objections of the bishop declared him to be a full elder in good standing, refusing to recommend for him a leave of absence, and

WHEREAS, year after year the New York Annual Conference has declared itself to be in opposition to the bias, discrimination, exclusion, and punitive spirit of The United Methodist Church in regard to its characterizations of LGBT people, its restrictions on their rights and privileges within The United Methodist Church, and the proscribing of the rights and duties of the clergy in ministering to all persons equally, and

WHEREAS, in 1999, the annual conference passed a resolution explicitly reflecting the Conference's belief that the UMC policy barring the recognition or celebration of "homosexual unions" "inhibits appropriate pastoral freedom in grace to respond fully and completely to God's call to inclusive ministries" and urging conference members to accordingly exercise restraint in filing charges against clergy, and in the event of church trials, to devise penalties reflective of the Conference's opposition to UMC policy, and

WHEREAS, in 2005, this annual conference passed a resolution that notes that "the *Book of Discipline's* assertion that 'the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching' is unfounded in Scripture, unsupported by the lessons of the Gospel and indeed, itself incompatible with Christian teaching" and recognizing that "individuals may be called to acts of conscience in response to God's call to inclusive community," and

WHEREAS, in 2010, the New York Annual Conference passed a resolution explicitly reaffirming the 1999 resolution; urging clergy "to minister equally to all members of their churches and to consider the Conference's call to inclusive ministries in deciding how to honor their congregants' covenantal commitments;" and further strengthened its lived efforts to foster inclusive ministries by recommending a penalty of one day paid leave for clergy convicted of blessing a gay or lesbian relationship, and

WHEREAS, in 2011 leading African-American United Methodist scholars issued a declaration challenging The United Methodist Church to embrace equality; Black Methodists for Church Renewal's national body declared its members to be opposed to the discriminatory policies of The United Methodist Church and urged their repeal; and the majority of retired bishops of The United Methodist Church made a similar declaration, and

WHEREAS, in 2011 the United States military abolished its discriminatory policies with the repeal of Don't Ask Don't Tell and New York State enacted marriage equality, following upon the legalization of gay marriage in Connecticut in 2008, making the entire New York Annual Conference an area in which persons of the same sex are legally free to marry, and

WHEREAS, in 2011 the New York Annual Conference passed a resolution once again affirming our longstanding support for the full inclusion of LGBT people in The United Methodist Church and committing the Conference to take out ads in LGBT publications that state that our Conference disagrees with the UMC's prejudiced views and policies and that we are working to change them, and

WHEREAS, despite threats of punitive actions by individuals opposed to the full rights of LGBT persons and despite the institutional pledge to enforce discrimination against LGBT persons in The United Methodist Church, LGBT people are finding welcoming places in The United Methodist Church and in the New York Annual Conference; they are finding clergy, laity and congregations embracing them joyfully as members of the body of Christ, as United Methodists in good standing and as gifted children of God entitled equally to all the ministries, ceremonies and sacraments of the church, and

WHEREAS, this welcoming spirit represents the future of The United Methodist Church and it brings to life our 7 conference's decades-long commitment to inclusive ministry, and

WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church is facing a pastoral crisis wherein every clergyperson and every congregation has been or will be called upon to provide the full range of its ministries to LGBT persons, and the denial of such ministries wounds both those who are denied these means of grace and those who deny them, and

WHEREAS, significant numbers of laity and clergy have declared themselves unwilling to look into the eyes of conscientious and faithful people and deny them any of the ministries of the church on the basis of their sexual orientation, and

WHEREAS, The United Methodists Church cannot rightly claim to be a church of open hearts, open minds and open doors or to be a church that practices radical hospitality until our hearts, our minds, our doors and our polity truly are open to all.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the New York Annual Conference reaffirm its historic commitment to the civil and ecclesiastical rights and privileges of all persons, including LGBT persons, and declare its passionate opposition to continued distinctions of Church law that restrict the rights and privileges of LGBT people in The United Methodist Church, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the New York Annual Conference, acknowledging the grave pastoral crisis facing the Church at all levels with regard to the pastoral care of LGBT people, acknowledge that clergy, lay persons and congregations encountering institutional discrimination that inhibits equal access to the means of grace for all persons may feel bound by conscience to offer the ministries and sacraments of the church to all persons on an equal basis.

Those who so act according to conscience do so in a way that is consistent with the long-standing principled declarations of this annual conference, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the New York Annual Conference acknowledge that leaders of the Conference, including cabinet members, bishops and members of boards and agencies of the annual conference, are also bound to exercise their consciences and are bound by Jesus's commandment to stand with the marginalized and the oppressed in our midst when called upon to enforce unjust laws, policies and procedures to the detriment of gay, lesbian, bisexual or

transgender individuals wishing to participate fully in the life of The United Methodist Church and those who minister faithfully to them, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Conference recognize that individuals who take punitive actions against others for offering the sacraments and rituals of the Church on an equal basis do so contrary to the spirit and declarations of the New York Annual Conference and risk grave harm to LGBT persons, their loved ones, their sisters and brothers in Christ, faithful clergy and the annual conference itself.

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## The Prayer Corner

**During Lent, all are invited to join together for a time of prayer prior to worship from 9:30 to 10 AM in the room off of Fellowship Hall.**

***In prayer, please remember: the people of Ukraine; our sisters and brothers in Christ, after recent mudslides in Ecuador; 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***

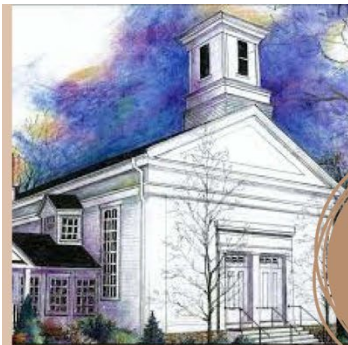
*If you would like our confidential prayer team to pray with you or for you, please reach out to Carolyn Shay, 203-518-3177 or 1jerseygirl52@gmail.com*

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## Parenting With Grace Is Coming

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 a.m. Our first in-person meeting will be in late May.

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.



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.*

*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.*

Hosted by:

Woodbury United Methodist Church

Co-facilitated by:

Tara Beall-Gomes & Meg Temple

tarabeallgomes15@gmail.com