



CHIMES

Whittier First UMC

Good News for All...through learning, action, and love

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RULES FOR LIFE

AN ANTIDOTE TO CHAOS
FEB 21 - MARCH 28

“During the Lenten season we are invited to look at the difficult things in our lives and in our world. We are invited, along with Jesus, to enter into the Temple of our hearts. There might be items in our hearts that occupy space that needs to be surrendered and re-examined. With the courage of the Spirit, we are invited to let the Spirit take a hold of our hearts!”

-Pastor Angela

Feb. 21 Rules for Life, Rule 1: Treat yourself like someone you are responsible for helping
Mark 1: 9-15

Feb. 28 Rules for Life, Rule 2: Pursue what is meaningful (Not what is expedient)
Mark 8: 31-38

March 7 Rules for Life, Rule 3:
Stand up straight with your shoulders back
John 2: 13-22

March 14 Rules for Life, Rule 4: Compare yourself to who you were yesterday, not to who someone else is today
John 3: 14-21

March 21 Rules for Life, Rule 5:
Assume that the person you are listening to might know something you don't
John 12: 20-33

March 28 Rules for Life, Rule 6: Set your house in perfect order before you criticize
Matthew 27: 11-26

MUSIC with MARVIN

Set your calendars to read “Music with Marvin,” **Thursday, March 11, at 7 PM.**

We shall cover 18 centuries of church music in about 30+ minutes, plus your insightful questions like “Why am I loving this so much?”

A Zoom invite will be sent out by request. See you then!

-Marvin Neumann, Director of Music

Coronavirus Delays General Conference and Forces Annual Conference Online

The coronavirus pandemic, now in its second year, has meant continued delays in resolving the major issues that befall the Methodist denomination, chief among them a way for Western and progressive Methodists to embrace inclusion to the LGBT community. General Conference, originally scheduled for 2020, has again been postponed another year; a virtual General Conference was considered but deemed not feasible due to the lack of reliable Internet on the African continent (and, to be frank, significant portions of this town and country as well), and the lack of vaccine availability outside a relative handful of countries. The Reconciling Ministries Network has expressed disappointment with the continuance of church policies toward the LGBT community, seen by myself and many others as oppressive, but they understand that it is essentially impossible to hold a fair General Conference in 2021. Meanwhile, a decision was made to take the 2021 California-Pacific Annual Conference virtual, as had been done in 2020. While it feels like the issues that have been plaguing the denomination for my entire adult lifetime may NEVER get resolved, it is my fervent hope that the pandemic will be under control, in this country at least, by the end of the year, and that 2022 will bring a resolution to these problems satisfactory to progressive and Western Methodists.

-Charles Bennett, Lay Delegate to Annual Conference

The Children's Team is preparing Easter Baskets to deliver to Sunday School and Messy Church kids!

We have baskets, grass and more but need a little help with the sweet stuffers! Donations of any of these treats (in fun or single serve size or individually wrapped) will help us make a Bible based Easter basket!

gum	Rolos	Snickers
Kit Kat	starlight mints	M & Ms
Milky Way	Almond Joy	3 Musketeers
Twix	mini packs of pretzels or goldfish crackers	Smarties
Swedish Fish	Life Savers (individual or rolls)	candy corn
peanut butter cups	Starbursts	packaged jelly beans (lots of colors)

Can you guess how each of these corresponds to Scripture? Drop the sweets off at the Office no later than **March 27th** so we can assemble safely and distribute!

BISHOP HAGIYA

Briefing on COVID-19

March 1, 2021

As we emerge from the deep thaw of our COVID-19 crisis, I am encouraged by the availability of the new vaccines. We have not arrived yet for a just distribution schedule, and I especially lament the inequality of distribution for our poorer and racially segregated populations. However, government officials are trying to do their best, and with a greater percentage of our population receiving vaccines, I am hopeful that we can emerge from our deep isolation.

As we set the stage for our own Cal-Pac Annual Conference response, one of our prime objectives is to emerge out of our COVID-19 crisis as safely as possible. Once again, we are not there yet, and we have to be diligent in our safety protocols to ensure that our churches do not transmit the virus.

One of our present realities as a large and diverse annual conference that covers thousands of miles and a whole ocean is the fact that “one size does not fit all.” We have multiple colored tiers of COVID safety, and even different state regulations we have to consider. It sometimes comes down to a case-by-case basis for us to approve various ministry plans. This is the reason why we have multiple sources of approval for reopening plans that includes the local church appointed pastor, church Administrative Council and District Superintendent.

Even this multiple approval system is not perfect, as some pastors can feel pressured to open up to in-person worship by congregation members when they have deep reservations. With this in mind, if you are in a red or purple tier, and if your pastor has not been vaccinated (twice), I believe it is unsafe to reopen to in-person worship. It is too great a risk to your beloved pastor, and because of the place of leadership she or he serves in the community at large, it is in the best interest of everyone to wait until your pastor is vaccinated completely. Our entire appointed Cabinet is in agreement about this policy, and our District Superintendents will enforce this policy.

With the vaccination schedule accelerating, it is only a matter of time before your pastor and a large percentage of your congregation will receive the vaccines. As a people of faith, we understand what patience means, and a few months can mean all the difference in the world to protect as many people as possible. I am deeply grateful that so many of you have been patient, and have prioritized safety over convenience. We have been rewarded by low transmission rates overall for our clergy and laity, and if we can hold on a little bit longer, we will reap that which we sow: the health and safety of each and every member of our annual conference!

Let me close today with the words in *Romans 8: 24-25*:

“For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope, for who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.”

Be the Hope,

Bishop Grant J. Hagiya

Los Angeles Area Resident Bishop