

The Messenger

April 7, 2020
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Encounters with Jesus: Easter in the Wilderness

Rev. Paul L. Escamilla

From out of nowhere, a virus has wreaked havoc across the planet. Its effects have run the gamut, from creating mild inconvenience to causing economic deprivation to taking lives. Along that spectrum are job loss; increased family tensions and even domestic abuse; depleted health care workers and the supplies upon which they depend; lapses into addiction and mental illness; faith unraveled; separation from family members who are sick and dying, or geographically remote. In a matter of weeks, this pandemic has cast our world into the shadows of uncertainty and fear, illness and even death.

The psalmist of Psalm 23 knows about shadows, and yet also about finding a way to sing about the goodness and mercy of God *even though . . . : Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for you are with me . . . You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.* Notice how this litany of life turned vibrant is not recited after having been whisked from the valley of shadows, but right there on location.

As we travel through this season of disruption and distress, and at the same time move through Holy Week—I invite you to find your way to the banister of Psalm 23. As you recite and ponder this time-kept prayer, reflect on the ways this moment feels like a valley of shadows. What about the pandemic leaves you sad, frightened, or anxious? Where has your faith been unsettled or felt vacuous? Now consider the psalm's *even though* dimension. Where do you see signs of God's goodness at work, even among the shadows of our global health crisis? In what ways have you sensed that rather than being distant or absent, God seems strangely more near? Where have you discovered a new desire to encourage others? To pray for others? To lend a hand, make a call, join an online prayer gathering? Where have you been able to give leadership in a more purposeful way, even from a distance?



May our journey through the shadows of Holy Week and of our present turmoil lead us from fear to love, from despair to hope, from cross to resurrection. By God's grace may our journey lead us to an Easter—even in the wilderness.

Grace and peace.

Thursday April 9	Friday April 10	Sunday April 12
6:30 p.m. Maundy Thursday Foot Washing Service	12:00 - 3:00 p.m. Stations of the Cross Tolling of the Bell	8:30 a.m. Easter Sunday Worship
7:00 p.m. Maundy Thursday Stripping of The Sanctuary	7:00 p.m. Good Friday Service of Music and Meditations	12:00 p.m. Pealing of the Easter Bells

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Our Life Together

Laura Healy, Director of Program Ministries

As Jesus served his disciples by washing their feet during their last supper together, we too are called to serve the world and the people around us. How do you serve your brothers and sisters in Christ? Will you gather with your family to wash each other's feet? Washing hands has become an act of service in this uncertain time. Preparing a meal is another daily way to serve your family. Can you carry a plate for a family member? Carry out a chore? Give a hug?

We invite you to share a photograph of how you are in service to each other and the world—perhaps washing the feet of a family member, or their hands; or serving a meal, or making a special greeting card. We will be selecting some of these to share as part of our Maundy Thursday Foot Washing service this Thursday, April 9. Other photos may be shared in other contexts. Send your photos (landscape, if possible) to aubrey@mylhumc.org.

Thank you, friends in Christ, for all the ways you are seeking to offer Christ, and to meet Christ, during these sacred days of Holy Week, and this sorrowful season of isolation and crisis.

Grace and peace.



*Our gesture
of service . . .*



LHUMC Scholarship Deadline: May 7, 2020

Thanks to the generosity of caring donors, the Laurel Heights UMC Scholarship Committee has scholarship funds available for the 2020-2021 school year. Scholarship applications are being accepted now through May 7, 2020 from anyone seeking an undergraduate or graduate degree. Church membership is not required. Scholarships are **not** auto renewing; current scholarship recipients must reapply. Contact Elizabeth Jackson for an application: ejackson@mylhumc.org

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CONTENT GENERATOR

For the time being, *The Messenger* will be published weekly on Tuesday afternoons. Submission of content for *The Messenger* will be due by 5 p.m. each Friday prior to publication. Please email submissions to aubrey@mylhumc.org.

Easter Lilies

April 12, 2020

Given By:

In Memory Of:

Mr. & Mrs. William Beuhler, Jr.

Our Parents

Blanche Birdsong

Oran Birdsong, Husband

Blanche Birdsong

Karen Birdsong, Daughter

Nancy & Richard Dugger

Rosalyn Dugger Bowers

Kitty Grantham

Dana Grantham

Kitty Grantham

Carrie Sims

Anna & Jon Lowry

The Rev. & Mrs. M. Dick Lowry

Anna & Jon Lowry

Judge & Mrs. George D. Taylor

Jane & Rusty Manning

Huberta Boyd

James & Mary Verette

Martha Hamil

Jeremiah Bought a Field

Rev. Jim Carr,

Minister of Pastoral Care



I have been investing in 529 college saving accounts for my grandchildren. When the pandemic hit, the markets started to plunge. My response was an involuntary reaction, "But, the college savings . . . what am I going to do?" It was like 9/11 or 2008 all over again. My initial thoughts and feelings were similar. Should I send the next round of deposits to the accounts?

After my initial reactive thoughts and feelings, I gave myself time to reflect on the situation, and how I would respond. Then, a phrase came into my head and I couldn't get rid of it: "Jeremiah bought a field."

In Jeremiah 32 we hear, "At that time the army of the king of Babylon was besieging Jerusalem, and the prophet Jeremiah was confined in the court of the guard." The inhabitants of the city were in dire straits and the prophet knew that things were going to end badly. But when a cousin told him that family property could be purchased, Jeremiah bought it. Why? Because he knew that "fields and vineyards shall again be bought in this land." Nothing is too hard for God. "I will bring them back to this place, and I will settle them in safety. They shall be my people, and I will be their God."

So, if Jeremiah bought a field, why would I not continue to invest in my grandchildren's future? It is not a completely blind act of faith. I saw what the markets did after 9/11 and 2008, but it is larger than that. In the end, I place myself with Jeremiah: I place my trust and hope in the power of God who promises restoration and renewal of what has been destroyed. It is the same divine Spirit who raised the one who died on a cross to a transformed life which has the power to transform other lives, even ours.

This week I sent deposits to my grandchildren's college accounts. Jeremiah bought a field.

Wednesday Evening Prayer Service

While we are physically distant from each other, our Laurel Heights community is discovering ways to be spiritually and relationally present to one another. One important way that we are staying connected in Christ is by continuing to share in the work of prayer. Tomorrow (Wednesday 4/8) from 6:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. we will have a time to gather by Zoom to pray for one another and the world. Paul Escamilla will guide our gathering.

There are three ways to join the prayer meeting:

Option 1: Click on this link: <https://zoom.us/j/130214408>

Option 2: If you use the Zoom app, click Join Meeting and enter the Meeting ID: 130 214 408

Option 3: Call (346)248-7799, and when prompted enter the Meeting ID: 130 214 408

Though scattered, we are gathered in prayer in the name of the one from whose love and belonging nothing can separate us, Jesus Christ our Savior.

Grace and peace.

Click [here](#) to read about our

Neighborhood Prayer Wall

Staying Healthy



Wellness Check-Ins

Our Wesley Nurse, Yvonne Garcia, will be available by phone only to take appointments until further notice. Please email YGarcia@mhm.org or call (210) 272-7921 to set up an appointment.

Sit and Be Fit on KLRN

If you've been missing the Moving On exercise class, tune in Monday through Friday at 11:00 a.m. to the Sit and Be Fit exercise program on KLRN San Antonio. Contact KLRN for on-air program information (210) 270-9000.

Fall Prevention in Older Adults

Click [here](#) to download a PowerPoint that was put together by Aixa L. Alvarez, MD for our Super Adults Day.

Click [here](#) for a diagram of 11 low-impact exercises you can do from home.

Giving to Laurel Heights

Online Gifts: Please visit our website, www.laurelheights.org/donate

Text to Give: Please text "LHUMC" to 73256. For illustrated step-by-step online and text giving instructions, click [here](#).

Checks: Please mail to LHUMC, Attn: Bookkeeper, 227 W. Woodlawn, SATX, 78212.

Thank you for your faithfulness in supporting Laurel Heights through this challenging season. Your generosity is deeply appreciated.

-The Finance Committee

A Prayer for a World Facing the Coronavirus

Dear God,
It seems like lots of uncertainty around us.
So many people who need prayers.
Today, I pray . . . [\(read more\)](#).

God's Glory in Creation

Mission of the Month April 2020: Creation Care

The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims His handiwork. Day unto day pours speech, and night unto night declares knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard; yet their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.

Psalm 19:1-4

The heavens are telling the glory of God. The world itself pours out on us wordless speech about God. In our wordy, busy lives we can learn a lot by listening more closely to creation's voices.

A relationship with God's creation and a ministry of caring for and healing the earth are integral to what it means to be a United Methodist. We believe that all of creation is God's, and that we are responsible for the ways in which we use and abuse it. Our natural world is to be valued and conserved because God has called humanity to be its caretakers (Genesis 1:26-31). Explore the ways United Methodists care for and love all of creation:

[Social Principles on the Environment](#)

Christian Assistance Ministry In Need

Below is a list of various ways you can help Christian Assistance Ministry (CAM) continue to serve through the COVID-19 pandemic:

Click [here](#) to make a monetary donation to CAM so they can purchase the necessary food items, baby items, hygiene items, and safety items to protect their staff and volunteers while they continue their work.

Consider pre-packing grocery bags or hygiene kits filled with essential items needed for families. Click [here](#) for a list of what goes in the grocery bags and hygiene kits. Contact skory@cam-sa.org for bag drop-off information.

If you or anyone you know has large outdoor fans, misters, or any type of a temporary air unit they can place underneath a canopy, contact skory@cam-sa.org. CAM is providing services outside, and it's starting to get very warm out. We need to keep our staff and volunteers cool as they work outside in this heat and humidity.

SLICED BREAD, SLICED HAM, CHEESE SLICES

Every morning CAM provides sandwiches for the sack lunches for San Antonio's vulnerable. Consider purchasing and donating these three sandwich ingredients to aid CAM in this work.

If you have any questions, please contact CAM Director of Development, Sarah Kory, at skory@cam-sa.org.

Although our doors are physically closed for this time to maintain responsible social distancing,
we remain steadfast in our Wesleyan tradition of

Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.

**Office staff will be available to answer phone calls and emails.
Please don't hesitate to reach out to any of us during this time.**



What staff meeting looks like for now . . .

We are all fast becoming Zoom video-conference aces!

**We miss you all, and are working hard to be sure that
Laurel Heights continues to serve as the hands and feet of
Christ. May God bless and keep you all.**



JOYS AND CONCERNS

Healing: William Beuhler, Diane Boehme, Dean Pearson, Doug Semmes,
Mal Hierholzer, Estelle Hogan, Gracie Huron,
David Bebinger, Marilyn Cook, Beth Rankin (*Ann Wheeler*),
Armando Diaz (*Sandra Ojeda Medina*),
Dianna Buxkemper, Shirley Melennyzer (*Teresa Garces*),
Darlene Shirey (*Wendell Davis*), Elden Stalnaker (*Roxane Darnell*).

God's Presence: Those affected by the COVID-19 virus and their families,
as well as for the caregivers and researchers working to treat those affected and
combat the spread of the disease; homebound members, the incarcerated,
and women and men in our military.

CONTACT US
Main 210.733.7156
Weekday School 210.732.6979

Clergy

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General Memorial

*In memory of Truman Smith,
from Deborah Callanan.*

*In memory of Truman Smith,
from Clyta Coder.*

*In memory of Truman Smith,
from Jeanette S. Henke.*

Sanctuary Restoration

*In honor of Ann McGlone,
from Sue Hall.*

You can submit a prayer of gratitude
or concern by emailing
prayers@mylhumc.org,
through [Facebook Messenger](#), or calling
the church office (210) 733-7156.