

The Messenger

May 20, 2020
Volume 44, Issue 15

A publication of Laurel Heights United Methodist Church

Looking for God's Good Story

Laura Healy, Director of Program Ministries

During this time of uncertainty, I have felt pretty unmoored. Our little household suffered a seismic shift when the remainder of Max's spring semester was canceled. Until then, I had not realized how well Frank and I had adjusted to his leaving the nest! As we jostled and shifted and tried to find a groove, we discovered some common ground in an unusual place.

You see, I asked for and received a new bird feeder for Christmas and it hangs from a tree branch just outside our kitchen window. We all have found ourselves gravitating to the window with a little more time to birdwatch in the past few weeks.

Then something incredible began to happen. We have seen birds this year that we have never seen in our backyard before. A painted bunting, a scarlet breasted grosbeak and just last week an indigo bunting! All of birds were colorful exclamation points among the army of little brown birds who regularly congregate at the feeder. Each one felt a little bit like the Holy Spirit popping in to say "keep watching!"

Something about returning again and again to that window throughout our day calmed us. It reminded us that no matter what problem or anxiety we were currently worrying the greater world spins on. It reminded us to believe in the reality of a close God, on a long timeline, writing a good story.

My wish for you is that you catch a glimpse of God's good story even in times such as these.



Each one
felt a little
bit like the
Holy Spirit
popping
in to say
"keep
watching!"



Ad Hoc Reentry Planning Team

As our city and state begin moving into a new phase of response to COVID-19, Laurel Heights has begun the process of planning for our own return to life together as a the gathered body of Christ. The first step of that process is the formation of a working group, called together by Paul Escamilla, our senior pastor, Sue Hall, chair of the administrative council, and Katie Myers, lay leader. The group is currently working to generate recommendations, processes, and frameworks that the church's leadership can use as we move into the coming weeks and months. The members of the working group are: Paul Escamilla, Sue Hall, Steve Haney, Ashley Landers, Katie Myers, Meaghan Rohlfs, and Thomas Sanders. The group will also be working in collaboration with other leaders, staff, and committees as the group's work develops. The current focus areas are: Worship, Staff, Communications, and New Opportunities for Worship and Service.

In light of COVID-19, Vacation Bible School as we had planned it, has been canceled. It is our hope to propose some alternative gatherings later in the summer.

Dear Laurel Heights Community

In the light of the COVID-19 health crisis, Laurel Heights United Methodist Church is exploring how best to plan for the coming weeks. Please take just a few minutes to complete a brief survey to assist the church's leadership in this effort. Thank you for your input. **We ask that you complete the survey by Friday, May 22nd.**

Click on this link to take the survey:

<https://www.laurelheights.org/surveys>

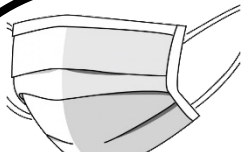
When We Can't Be Together

Ellen Evans

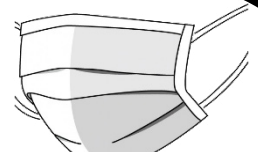
The COVID-19 pandemic has caused much fear, pain and death to God's people worldwide! It is difficult to know how to respond during this time of separation, especially from our church community. I miss the physical presence, conversations, hugs, and corporate worship! Many questions come to mind: What am I supposed to be thinking, feeling and doing now? At times like these, I need to remind myself whose I am and that I am not alone, as nothing can separate me from the love of God! He is always with me.

I accepted a request from Susan Holloway to call the members of the Every Woman's Sunday School class on a weekly basis during this difficult time. There were some members on the list that were not in Sunday School for a very long time! I called them also! Our class has been together for many years, so I was astounded at the deeper connection I felt as we talked each week!

I'd like to share a little of the conversation I had with a former member whose husband had died two years ago. She mentioned that she hadn't been back to church since then. She wasn't ready. We talked about our husbands deaths and a little about our grief. Then I told her what the church was like now and what a special pastor we had! I hoped when it was possible to gather again, she would come back to church! "You know what," I said, "When you come back, I am going to sit with you!" She exclaimed, "You would do that?" "Of course I would," I replied! I so look forward to that day! In the meantime, we still have work to do, to be Christ's disciples especially during a pandemic. All we have to do is answer the call!



Face Masks Needed.



If you have extra cloth face masks that you ordered or you are sewing cloth face masks for others, consider Laurel Heights. We are gathering face masks to be used by our neighbors that come to dinner on Wednesday night, as well as people who come to our church building as we look to have our first gatherings in June. Several non-profits are also in need of masks if we collect extra.

Please, e-mail Liz Escamilla if you can contribute, el escamilla96@gmail.com.



summer isn't canceled.

*Let's make this
summer one
that our Project
Transformation
students will never
forget!*

We will be distributing starter kits and supplemental supply bags each of the 8 weeks of camp along with meals from the SA Food Bank. You can help by donating the materials for a Starter Kit.

Please see the full list below.

We will have a supply drop off in the Woodlawn parking lot on Monday, June 1st from 11am to noon. If you need your supplies picked up, just call the church and we will arrange pick up. If you'd prefer, you can order from Amazon and have the supplies shipped directly to the church!

Project Transformation Supply List

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| pencils | playing cards |
| crayons | Play Doh |
| markers | pom poms (assorted colors) |
| colored pencils | straws |
| pencil sharpeners | water beads |
| child's scissors | balloons |
| white copy paper | jigsaw puzzles (age 6-13 appropriate) |
| construction paper | googly Eyes |
| spiral notebooks 70-100 pages | small beads |
| glue sticks | string (for crafts or jewelry) |
| pallet water colors | multi-colored feathers |
| pipe cleaners (assorted colors) | brain teaser puzzle |
| sidewalk chalk | single pad post it notes |
| dice | reading pencils |
| small bottles of bubbles with wand | Silly Putty |
| jump ropes | yoyos |

There are a number of ways that you can help make sure that our Project Transformation students have a wonderful summer experience. If you are interested in volunteering as a Reading Buddy or Pen Pal, go ahead and get your background check out of the way. Log in to Safe Gatherings <https://safegatherings.com> to get that process started.

I will have details about both of those volunteer opportunities very soon.

Please email me at lhealy@mylhumc.org if you have any questions.

Laura Healy
Laura Healy, Director of Program Ministries

Open-Ended Waiting, Trusting Something Larger

Rev. Jim Carr, Minister of Pastoral Care

I have been sharing thoughts from Henri Nouwen on the meaning of waiting. This week we continue to follow his thoughts on the nature of waiting. We've listened as he shared with us that waiting can be an act of faith when there is a sense of divine promise within it, and that those who wait are active in being fully present as they nurture and are nurtured by the potential of the promise in each moment.

This week he tells us that waiting is open-ended, and this is hard. It is hard because we tend to be willing to wait for our wishes to be fulfilled. We wish to have specific things, or for things to go the way we want them to go. But, this is not open-ended waiting. He says, "A lot of our waiting is not open-ended. Instead, our waiting is a way of controlling the future. We want the future to go in a very specific direction, and if this does not happen we are disappointed and can even slip into despair. We want to do the things that will make the desired events take place. Here we can see how wishes tend to be connected with fears."

But, there is something different from wishes that is open-ended. "Hope is something very different. Hope is trusting that something will be fulfilled, but fulfilled according to the promises and not just according to our wishes. Therefore, hope is always open-ended." And then he says, "I have found it very important in my life to let go of my wishes and start hoping. It was only when I was willing to let go of wishes that something really new, something beyond my own expectations, could happen to me."

Waiting in this way involves a deep trust that is willing to let go of control in order to be open to all possibilities, like Mary, who said to the angel, "I am the handmaid of the Lord. Let what you have said be done to me" (Luke 1:38, JB). It means trusting the giver of the promise. This is hard to do in a time like the present which is challenging and reshaping all of our most comfortable and accustomed ways of doing things in the world. What Nouwen is presenting to us here is a deeply radical attitude rooted in trusting something larger than ourselves. It means we choose God's love rather than wishes rooted in our own fears.

So, let's listen to Nouwen's own words. "The spiritual life is a life in which we wait, actively present to the moment, trusting that new things will happen to us, new things that are far beyond our own imagination, fantasy, or prediction. That, indeed, is a very radical stance toward life in a world preoccupied with control."

Next week we will move from looking at the nature of waiting to considering the practice of waiting.



“ . . . because if God can raise Jesus Christ from death to life, then history has hope and you and I can be born anew into that hope that lives planted deep inside of us, springing eternal from our hearts into life.”

from the May 17 sermon by Rev. Paul Escamilla.

Listen to the full sermon here: [A hope that lives.](#)

May 2020 Mission of the Month Church Under the Bridge

Church Under the Bridge began in the Spring of 1997, as the name suggests, under the overpass bridge at US Highway 281 adjacent from the old Pearl Brewery near Broadway. By the Fall of 2005, God had placed a calling in the heart of a benefactor to purchase land and build a new church at no cost to the ministry. CUB holds a worship service, clothes closet, hygiene kits and serves a hot meal every Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday evening.

For more information, please visit CUB-SA.org

Laurel Heights UMC has been in ministry with CUB since December 1998. It all began with pioneers Diane Boehme and Julie Mazel, who provided, prepared, and served homemade soup, salad and dessert on the first Thursday of every month under the bridge. Neither, rain, sleet, snow, heat, or cold interrupted the mission.

To help support CUB this month, consider donating the following items:

- Individually wrapped snacks and desserts
- Gently used or new men's, women's, and children's clothing
 - New white socks • Backpacks • Gloves
- Personal and oral hygiene items (men and women)
- Financial contributions can be made through LHUMC (laurelheights.org/donate)

**Donations will be accepted every Friday from 2-3 p.m.
at Church Under the Bridge
724 Chestnut St., San Antonio, TX 78202**

For additional information or questions, contact Judy Davis (210) 392-2282.



Wednesday Evening Prayer Service

Though scattered, we are gathered in prayer in the name of the one from whose love and belonging nothing can separate us from Christ our Lord. Today (5/20) 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. Rev. Paul Escamilla will guide the meeting.

There are three ways to join the service:

Option 1: Click on this link:

<https://zoom.us/j/130214408>

Option 2: Download 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

Memorial Gifts

General Memorial Fund

In memory of Truman Smith,
given by Gail Raney.

In memory of Dr. Reeves Smith,
given by Genny & Nick Campbell

In memory of Dr. Reeves Smith,
given by Helen & Henry Perkins.



Birthday Blessings May 19-31

5/19
Matthew Scott

5/20
Jerry Geerdes
Irene Vaca

5/23
Ella Sanders
Henry Guven

5/24
Phifer Oleson

5/25
Julian Lopez

5/27
Bertha Basil
Nathan Garza

5/28
Glynis Taylor

5/29
Mari Alvarez
Luke Farias

5/31
Jeanne Redmond

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

JOYS AND CONCERNS

Healing: Billie Arredondo, Will Beal, William Beuhler, Diane Halim, Estelle Hogan, Larry Howard, Liz Hughes, Gracie Huron, Marvin Huth, Jane Manning, Dean Pearson, Doug Semmes, Gena (*Thad Dorsey*), Jeanne Coder (*Clyta Coder*), Meg Mollohan (*Rachel Goeres*), Hanna McCuiston (*Vicki McCuiston*), Artis Owens (*Barbara Miller*), Bryan Geist, Nora Winkler (*Teresa Garces*), David Bebinger, Marilyn Cook, Beth Rankin (*Ann Wheeler*).

For those who mourn: Beverly Smith and family, at the loss of Reeves Smith.

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.

Bob and Margaret Parsons are celebrating the arrival of a new great grand baby. Jonathan Cedric Drake was born May 11 at 6:27 PM. Everett is now a big brother. He wanted to hold his new baby brother, but when told he had to put down his new blue truck he decided he would rather hold his new blue truck. Both mother and baby are doing well.

Contact Us

Clergy

Rev. Paul L. Escamilla, Senior Pastor
escamilla@mylhumc.org

Rev. Jim Carr,
Minister of Pastoral Care
Rev. Tanya Campen,
Deacon in Residence
tcampen@riotexas.org

Programming

Susan Holloway, Director of Super Adults (210) 872-8031
Laurie Miracle, Weekday School Director (210) 732-6979
Geoffrey Waite, Director of Music
music@mylhumc.org
Laura Healy,
Director of Program Ministries
lhealy@mylhumc.org
Yvonne Garcia, RN, Wesley Nurse
(210) 272-7921
ygarcia@mhm.org

Office and Facilities

Elizabeth Jackson,
Administrative Secretary
ejackson@mylhumc.org
Louise Dudley, Bookkeeper
louise@mylhumc.org
Jesse Fernandez,
Building Superintendent
jfernandez@mylhumc.org
Aubrey Reichman,
Communications Coordinator
aubrey@mylhumc.org

Content Generator

With a weekly publication of The Messenger, please submit any content for print by 5 p.m. each Friday. Submissions can be sent to aubrey@mylhumc.org.

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](#).

Give By Check:

Please mail to LHUMC,
attn: Bookkeeper,
227 W. Woodlawn Ave.,
San Antonio, TX, 78212.

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

-The Finance Committee