



The Messenger

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Tethered by our freedom

Rev. Paul Escamilla, Senior Pastor

It goes without saying that Independence Day brings the idea of freedom to mind. The word “freedom” has its roots in the Indo-European word, *pri*, meaning “to love.” *Pri* became *priya* in Sanskrit, which eventually gave birth to the Old English word *freon* (this was before air conditioning, so no relation there). *Freon* eventually forked off in two directions to become, in modern English, *friend* and *free*.

It should come as no surprise to learn that the roots of “love,” “friend,” and “free” are intertwined. Experience would confirm that to love another is to offer both friendship and freedom, while to be loved is to experience these two gifts as expressions of that love.

Freedom, then, has more to do with connectedness than with distance. We can judge the extent and quality of our various freedoms far more accurately on the basis of how we are *related* to the other—whether God, another person or group, or other nations—than how *independent* we are from any of these. Freedom, in other words, is not so much *from* others as *for* others, which means that on a fairly regular basis, and certainly lately on the American scene, it tends to have us in one another’s faces, figuring out what is reasonable, fair, just, and humane for all involved.

The idea that freedom means everyone tolerating one another is rather limited, given the etymology of the word. More appropriate would be the dynamic notion of tolerance growing toward interest, interest evolving into esteem. We ultimately become free when I begin to see you, and you me, as an invaluable addition, indispensable to the grand matrix (some days we might say mishmash) of the good society.

Freedom is not simply an heirloom handed down by our fathers and mothers for safe keeping. It is the shop keeping we do every generation, every decade, every *day* to cultivate a country in which friendship and love can be lived out respectfully, artfully, even joyfully among both the acquaintance and the stranger.

I know that’s a lofty, maybe even quixotic, vision for human coexistence on a large scale. But then, so is “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all . . . are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” Isn’t it outsize dreams as much as anything that we celebrate on Independence Day?

Grace and peace.



Holy Communion during Isolation

In a time of limitations and restrictions related to physical proximity, we are seeking to innovate faithfully and responsively in sharing the ritual practices of our life together. Among these practices are Holy Communion, a sacrament shared by very few in the congregation since mid-March when we ceased to gather in person for worship.

As a way of seeking to restore a sacramental dimension to our worship life we will be hosting two virtual services of Holy Communion in the coming week. All are invited to share Holy Communion with a Zoom platform on Sunday, July 5th at 5:30 p.m. and again on Wednesday, July 8th at 6:30 p.m. The Wednesday service will take the place of the regularly scheduled Prayer Gathering.

<p>Holy Communion by Zoom</p> <p>Sunday, July 5th 5:30 p.m.</p>	<p>Holy Communion by Zoom</p> <p>Wednesday, July 8th 6:30 p.m.</p> <p><i>*to take place of the regularly scheduled Prayer Gathering</i></p>
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The Zoom platform will allow participants to see one another, including the presider, our senior pastor, Rev. Paul Escamilla, on a screen. Each household will be encouraged to bring elements to that gathering—bread, and juice or wine—and to partake of these during the time of table sharing, each in our own location.

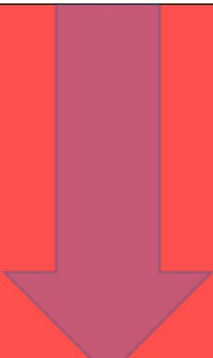
These gatherings will require participants to utilize a Zoom application, with a link to be provided later this week. Please notify the church office if you would like assistance in securing Zoom on your electronic device (phone, computer, etc.). (210) 733-7156.

Who shall say how bread and wine God into us conveys . . . fills the faithful people's hearts with all the life of God.
- Charles Wesley

The Administrative Council has adopted the following model for evaluating local COVID-19 activity to make decisions about congregational activities at Laurel Heights. The model was developed by the Ad Hoc Committee for COVID-19 Response and will be evaluated regularly and updated as we continue to adjust to living with COVID-19. For a link to the full document, please click [here](#).

Current Level: **Red**

Sunday worship and other gatherings will continue in online formats only. We will review the current status weekly and update the congregation on Wednesdays.

RED	<p>Suspension of all in-person congregational activities. *</p> <p>Wednesday Night meals in the parking lot may continue, 12 Step groups may continue at our discretion</p>		<p>7-Day Avg Less Than 200</p> <p>Doubling Rate Greater Than 7 days</p> <p>Trend of Decreasing Cases (7-day averages over a week)</p>
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*Exceptions in special circumstances may be considered and granted by the ad hoc committee.

Jesus Waits, and Reveals Who He Is

Rev. Jim Carr, Minister of Pastoral Care

In an article on the spirituality of waiting, Henri Nouwen tells of conversations with a friend who was terminally ill with cancer. His friend said, “Henri, here I am lying in this bed, and I don’t even know how to think about being sick. My whole way of thinking about myself is in terms of action, in terms of doing things for people. My life is valuable because I’ve been able to do many things for many people. And suddenly, here I am, passive, and I can’t do anything anymore. Help me to think about this situation in a new way. Help me to think about my not being able to do anything anymore so I won’t be driven to despair. Help me to understand what it means that now all sorts of people are doing things to me over which I have no control.”



Nouwen chose to work with his friend to find an answer to his question. Together, they read and discussed a book, *The Stature of Waiting*. The author, W. A. Vanstone, sees the issue of passive waiting (passion) to be an increasingly important question for people today. He presents Jesus in Gethsemane as a paradigm for our understanding.

Like Nouwen’s friend, Jesus’ ministry was active in doing things for and with people. He went to Jerusalem to announce his good news, and to present a choice to the people there: will they be his disciples, or his executioners? In Gethsemane, Jesus confronts the question: How will they come? Jesus waits to see. His passion begins. As Jesus leaves the garden, Judas hands him over to the authorities. The authorities come armed with swords. Judas disappears.

Even as his time of acting ends and he is acted upon by others, Jesus asserts his identity. Jesus asks, “Whom do you seek?” They answer, “Jesus of Nazareth.” He says, “I am he.” (John 18:5, Greek ‘ego eime,’ see Exodus 3:1-6, 14). Even as Jesus is handed over, he asserts his identity. He is divine presence as well as a human being. Nouwen says it was time for Jesus’ “glory” to be revealed. Even as he moves toward the cross to be lifted up in abandoned desolation as a passive victim, he reveals that he will be lifted up in glory and his cross will become a sign of hope and new life (John 3:14-15). The signs of resurrection are already breaking through. This is the theology of John’s Gospel, and the way Nouwen shares it with with his friend.

Even as Jesus is handed over, he asserts his identity.

Nouwen says, “When we allow ourselves to feel fully how we are being acted upon, we can come in touch with a new life that we were not even aware was there. This was the question my sick friend and I talked about constantly. Could he taste the new life in the midst of his passion?” Their answer to this will open profound possibilities for each of us.

A Word of Witness by Max Healy from Worship on Sunday, June 28th, 2020

When I was asked on short notice to stand in as liturgist this past Sunday, I was willing. I always strive to be willing to answer the call to serve in my faith. However, with service comes discomfort—which Pastor Paul, quoting our bishop in his sermon, told us is a spiritual discipline in its own right.

But I think God wants us to be more than simply willing. In these times of imaginable and unimaginable hardship, I think that we should actively search and be grateful for opportunities to serve, big or small. An opportunity to serve is a powerful reminder of God’s presence in our lives and a renewal of our hope.



Experience Our Worshipping Community Online

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 (7/1) 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.

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

Holy God,

we are called today
to witness,
to see the terrible images we
cannot unsee,
to hear the cries of the
suffering,
to name our society's violent
and dangerous ways.
To shine what light we can
into all that darkness.

Click here to view our
Resources for Racial Justice.

Click here to listen to the musical offerings of our organist and Director of Music, Geoffrey Waite.

[IMMIGRANT RIGHTS](#)

[LOS DERECHOS DE INMIGRANTES](#)

Sermon Audio

Listen to the full sermon here:

[Water and welcome](#)



Sunday Worship and Summer in the Story

Live-stream 8:30 a.m.

[Facebook.com/LaurelHeightsUMC](https://www.facebook.com/LaurelHeightsUMC)

[LaurelHeights.org/Online](https://www.LaurelHeights.org/Online)

For the present, our Sunday worship service will be live-streamed at 8:30 a.m. Following the live-stream, the service will be available for sharing and viewing on Vimeo, Facebook, and our website.

Summer in the Story will continue to be posted to Vimeo, Facebook, and our website at 10:00 a.m.

www.laurelheights.org

[Facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com)

[Vimeo.com](https://www.vimeo.com)

Project Transformation

July 2020 Mission of the Month



It is pretty quiet right now at the church.

Most of the staff is working from home and to the casual observer, it might look like there's not too much going on. This summer definitely looks different from our past summers as a Project Transformation site church. Yet, summer isn't canceled and Project Transformation is definitely happening!

Every Monday through Thursday morning, the families of this neighborhood are being fed physically, intellectually and creatively by Project Transformation. Lunches and snacks from the San Antonio Food Bank are being passed through car windows as well as bubbles, crayons and sidewalk chalk, and books from our Project Transformation library! Our PT intern, Sciara Segura (click [here](#) to meet the PT Interns!) is here early to prep for the distribution hour (11-noon).

Traffic varies from day to day but Sciara is always ready with a smile and a book or two!

It is not too late to be a part of the summer fun! July stretches before us and there is still time to sign up to be a Project Transformation pen pal or a virtual Reading Buddy!

**SIGN UP TO BE A
PT PEN PAL!**

**VOLUNTEER TO BE A
VIRTUAL READING BUDDY!**

Click [here](#) to experience #PTAtHome Summer Fun with virtual field trips, weekly chapel, and wholesome activities for each age group!

[Home](#) [Elementary](#) [Middle School](#) [High School](#)

So choose your age group below and let's get started!



Elementary

1st-5th grade

[Click Here](#)



Youth

6th-9th grade

[Click Here](#)



LITE

10th-12th grade

[Click Here](#)



I am a Parent

[Click Here](#)

¡Haga clic [aquí](#) para experimentar #PTAtHome con excursiones virtuales, capilla semanal y actividades saludables para cada grupo de edad!

For more information, or to make a donation you can visit <https://projecttransformation.org/rio-texas>

Birthday Blessings July 1 - 8

<p>7/1 John Ewing Doug Parsley Larry Howard</p> <p>7/2 Marie Lanoux</p> <p>7/3 Aleene Block Larhesa Moon</p> <p>7/4 Dorcus Manning</p>	 <p>7/5 Ann Beuhler</p> <p>7/6 Robert Barrows Catherine Whitley</p> <p>7/7 Tommy Barrows Andrea Lee Lele Krieger</p> <p>7/8 Doris Alderman</p>
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Budget Receipts:	June	Y-T-D
Contributions Received	\$56,315.34	\$384,579.76
Other Receipts	\$5,582.36	\$48,230.67
Total Budget Receipts:	\$61,897.70	\$432,810.43
Budget Expenses:	\$77,675.60	\$432,484.21
Ahead (Behind):	-\$15,777.90	\$326.22
PPP Loan Proceeds	\$32,867.19	\$101,074.93
Trustee Loan		\$75,000.00
Paid 1/1/19		(\$20,000.00)
Balance Due:		\$55,000.00

JOYS AND CONCERNS

Healing: William Beuhler, Vicki Ferguson, Alice Foeh, Diane Halim, Estelle Hogan, Mary Howard, Larry Howard, Gracie Huron, Marvin Huth, Jane Manning, Concepcion Martinez, Dean Pearson, Doug Semmes, Bonnie Surber, Hanna McCuistion (*Vicki McCuistion*), Meg Mollohan (*Rachel Goeres*), Reynaldo Trevino (*Kitty Grantham*), Kat Shapiro (*Juanita Souder*).

Those Who Mourn: The family of Henry Birdwell, who passed away this week; the family of Carolyn Hughes, who passed away last week.

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

You can submit a prayer of gratitude or concern by emailing prayers@mylhmc.org or calling (210) 733-7156.

Memorial Gifts

General Memorial Fund

In memory of Lydia Powell, given by Nancy Richter.

In memory of Mrs. Beverly Smith, given by Wesley Dowdy.

In memory of Beverly & Reeves Smith, given by Debbie Mabry.

In memory of Beverly & Reeves Smith, given by Mr. & Mrs. Bowman Williams.

Music Fund

In memory of Everett Dean Houser, given by Dr. Jan Daniel Garverick.

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.

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@mylhmc.org.

Contact Us

To reach the office staff by phone, please call (210) 733-7156. For an appointment with our Yvonne Garcia, RN, our Wesley Nurse, please call (210) 272-7921.

For a full list of staff email address, please visit our website: www.laurelheights.org