



The Messenger

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Troubled Waters

Rev. Laura Merrill

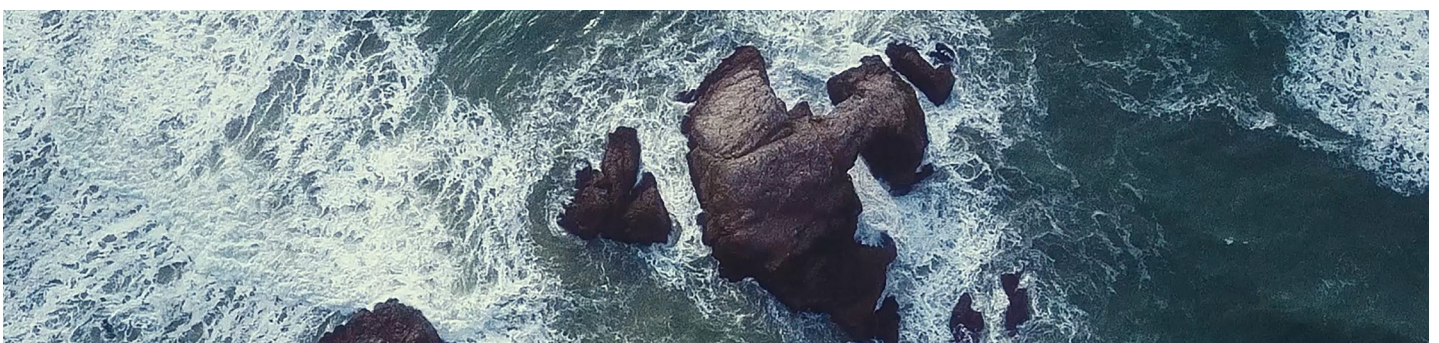
Over and over recently, the image of troubled waters has come to my mind. The term evokes for me everything from the classic Simon and Garfunkel song to gospel stories of Jesus and his disciples on a boat in a storm on the lake. Water in the Bible can symbolize chaos or deep power, beyond human control. It can also be a place of passage into freedom, such as the Jordan River or the Red Sea.

In John 5, the pool at Beth-zatha (known also as Bethesda) was a place of healing. The people believed that when the water was troubled, it held special healing power. Folk would wait by the side of the pool for the water to be disturbed, and the first one in would get the healing. There's some speculation about what was really going on in the pool. A late addition to the scripture said an angel would come and disturb the water. Others have proposed that it was the rhythm of a natural spring.

Especially in the moment we are living as a nation, the thought of water being stirred up as a sign of healing is powerful. Deep power, moving, with room for us to enter and cross over is frightening and inviting all at once. I think of courageous, enslaved Black people who decided to risk their lives for the sake of freedom, escaping their slavery and claiming the life they knew God intended for them. They knew, as I hope we might also trust, that the God who is troubling the waters is the same God who has promised to lead us through the water. We have trouble aplenty, to be sure, and the waters in this moment are roiled and frightening. But our God is able, and the cause of moving into freedom for all of God's people is just. So may we sing with the brave ones of the past:

*Wade in the water
Wade in the water, children
Wade in the water
God's gonna trouble the water*

Take heart and courage today in the life of those who have crossed through these waters before us and in the power of our gracious God.



Join realm[®] and stay connected!

Realm Connect is Coming to Laurel Heights

The staff at Laurel Heights has implemented a new administrative software called **Realm Connect** to help run the daily operations of our church. Now, it's time to share it with you.

Realm Connect allows church members to view church news & upcoming events, share contact information with other members, and manage their giving.

Realm Connect will be accessible on any PC, tablet, or smartphone.



Realm Connect will replace the paper church directory that's been distributed in the past. However, paper copies of a non-pictorial Laurel Heights Member roster will still be available for members who request one. Look for an upcoming email or letter next week asking for your permission to share your contact information with others.

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.

Waiting Is Not Empty, But Filled With Meaning—Can We See It?

Rev. Jim Carr, Minister of Pastoral Care

COVID-19 is changing the world, and it is changing us. I am convinced it is important for me to be aware of the reality around me and within me. How I understand this is important, and how I respond is equally important. This time of waiting is not empty, but is filled with meaning—if we can see it. We may discover on the other side of this that we do not recover the life we left in March. We may find a new life with a new way of being.



W. H. Vanstone, the author whose writing Henri Nouwen and his terminally ill friend probed intensely, says: “Waiting can be the most intense and poignant of all human experiences—the experience which, above all others, strips us of affectation and self-deception and reveals to us the reality of our needs, our values and ourselves.” “Need or dependence can disclose not only our own deficiency but also the power and value of people and things in the world around us.” Our receptivity to this reality can have a transforming power. In this, there is a “high calling—that of standing beside God and receiving into the transforming mirror of our consciousness what the world really is.”

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? Could he see that in his being acted upon by the hospital staff he was already being prepared for a deeper love? It was a love that had been underneath all the action, but he had not tasted it fully. In the midst of our waiting, we can already experience the resurrection.”

This time of waiting is not empty, but is filled with meaning—if we can see it. We may discover on the other side of this that we do not recover the life we left in March. We may find a new life with a new way of being.

Nouwen: “If it is true that God in Jesus Christ is waiting for our response to divine love, then we can discover a whole new perspective on how to wait in life. We can be obedient people who do not always try to go back to the action but who recognize the fulfillment of our deepest humanity in passion, waiting.”

Viktor Frankl, an Austrian doctor imprisoned in a Nazi concentration camp, tells a story of “inner greatness” in a young woman who was dying in the prison infirmary. “In my former life I was spoiled and did not take spiritual accomplishments seriously.’ Pointing through the window of the hut, she said, ‘This tree here is the only friend I have in my loneliness.’ Through that window she could see just one branch of a chestnut tree, and on the branch were two blossoms. ‘I often talk to this tree,’ she said to me. I was startled and didn’t quite know how to take her words. Was she delirious? Did she have occasional hallucinations? Anxiously I asked her if the tree replied. ‘Yes.’ What did it say to her? She answered, ‘It said to me, ‘I am here—I am here—I am life, eternal life.’” (From *Man’s Search for Meaning*)



Experience Our Worshipping Community Online

Wednesday Evening Holy Communion

As a way of seeking to restore a sacramental dimension to our worship life we will be hosting a virtual service of Holy Communion in the coming week. All are invited to share Holy Communion with a Zoom platform on Wednesday, July 8th at 6:30 p.m.

This will take the place of the regularly scheduled Prayer Gathering.

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

The Wednesday Prayer Gathering will continue as scheduled next week, July 15.

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:
[The gift of rest](#)



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



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!



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

Birthday Blessings July 9-16

7/9
Pam Kruckner
Marjorie Parrigan
Katherine Carvalhinhos

7/13
Paul Campbell
Charlotte Morton

7/11
Annabella Garcia
Sasha Mitchell
Donna Semmes



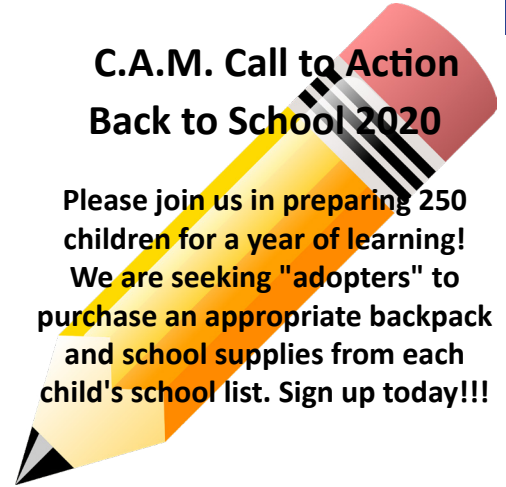
7/14
Sarah Adams
Skyler Barron
David Lindquist
Mary Howard

7/12
Robert Basil
Charlie Moore

7/16
Debbie Campbell
McKay Byrd

C.A.M. Call to Action Back to School 2020

Please join us in preparing 250 children for a year of learning! We are seeking "adopters" to purchase an appropriate backpack and school supplies from each child's school list. Sign up today!!!



Gifts

In honor of Rev. Paul Escamilla, given by Anna & Jon Lowry.

In honor of Geoffrey Waite, given by Anna & Jon Lowry.

General Memorial Fund

In memory of Beverly & Reeves Smith, given by Anna & Jon Lowry.

In memory of Truman Smith, given by Anna & Jon Lowry.

In memory of Dinah Tanner, given by Anna & Jon Lowry.

In memory of Diane Boehme, given by Anna & Jon Lowry.

In memory of Lydia Powell, given by Anna & Jon Lowry.

In memory of Rev. Mal Hierholzer, given by Anna & Jon Lowry.

In memory of June Weir, given by Anna & Jon Lowry.

JOYS AND CONCERNS

Healing: William Beuhler, Vicki Ferguson, Alice Foeh, Diane Halim, Estelle Hogan, Larry Howard, Mary Howard, Gracie Huron, Marvin Huth, Jane Manning, Sandra Ojeda-Medina, Noe Medina, Shelley McMullen, Bill Myers, May O'Neal, Dean Pearson, Louise Rawlings, Doug Semmes, Bonnie Surber, Kat Shapiro (*Juanita Souder*), Ken Minter (*Thomas Sanders*).

Those Who Mourn: The Family of Henry Birdwell, who passed away June 28. The Family of Carolyn Hughes, who passed away June 25.

God's Presence: Brent Key and daughter, McKenna (*Sarah Groff-Bodner*), 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@mylhumc.org or calling (210) 733-7156.

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@mylhumc.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