



# The Messenger

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## **Welcome to Realm Connect**

*Rev. Paul L. Escamilla, Senior Pastor*

Nearly a year ago the Laurel Heights UMC Finance Committee approved the purchase of a new church administration software called Realm Connect. A leading software tool in local churches, Realm Connect allows members and staff to find an email address, check for church news and updates, send a group notice for a meeting, and communicate in other ways within the Laurel Heights congregation. It also allows members to manage their financial giving, such as making a contribution or checking on the status of a pledge. The Realm Connect application can be placed on a desktop computer or a smart phone.

Up to now, membership information (names, phone numbers, addresses, etc.) has been available to us all in print-out form, and in prior years in a pictorial directory format. Of course, in both cases the contents were outdated very soon after printing. This new program will update regularly to include new members, changes of information, etc.

For the last several months the church staff has had the benefit—I would say the *blessing*—of having the Realm app on our phones and desktop computers, and with it the ability to access an address, a phone number, or an email at the stroke of three or four keys. Near the beginning of this year, the Realm Connect app was shared beyond the staff with a few lay leaders, and about two months ago the Administrative Council was invited to secure Realm Connect in order to begin using its many features for connecting with each other and the wider church family.



Look for either an email or a letter in the mail inviting you to indicate your permission and preferences in the new Realm Connect application.



Your swift reply will be appreciated.

Thank you!

Later this month Realm Connect will be made available to the entire congregation. Only members of Laurel Heights will have access to relevant information, and each member can determine which information can be shared with the online directory. Consider a scenario in which you are wanting to reach out to a new acquaintance, a church leader, or a visitor to your online Sunday school class. You will be able to do so without having to either consult a computer print-out or pictorial directory that may or may not have updated information or call the church office for a phone number or email address. I hope you will find, as I have, that the difference is dramatic.

On the flyleaf of his novel, *Howard's End*, the writer E. M. Forster placed these two words: Only connect. With that simple message he described so very well what our life together is about: connecting. I look forward to the many, many ways we will be able to build and strengthen that matrix of community—especially during a time of physical separation—by this wonderful new means.

Grace and peace.

## A Word of Witness by James Law

from Worship on Sunday, July 12th, 2020



In 2015 we realized that there was a direct need to offer recovery meetings at our church. There are five recovery houses located within a ten-block radius of Laurel Heights United Methodist Church. We began our first meeting in May of that year. We had five people in attendance. Since then, we offer two meetings per week, and the attendance has grown dramatically.

We are currently offering meetings on Monday and Wednesday, in the church, at 7:00 pm in room 312. Socially distanced and wearing masks. We also offer the same two meetings through a Zoom invitation. We would like to thank the staff and the congregation of Laurel Heights United Methodist Church for their commitment to helping those who suffer from alcoholism and addiction by allowing a comfortable and safe environment for all to meet.

*Lead us, Good Shepherd, through the waters:  
be the rock on which we stand.*

Benedict of Nursia said this: “The Lord himself in the gospel teaches us the same when he says: I shall liken anyone who hears my words and carries them out in deed to one who is wise enough to build on a rock; then the floods came and the winds blew and struck that house, but it did not fall because it was built on a rock. It is in the light of that teaching that we may mend our evil ways, the days of our mortal lives are allowed us as a sort of truce for improvement. So St. Paul says:

Do you not know that God is patient with us so as to lead us to repentance?  
The Lord himself says in his gentle care for us: I do not want the death of a sinner;  
let all sinners rather turn away from sin and live.”

*from Common Prayer: A Liturgy for Ordinary Radicals.*

For a link to the full document for evaluating local COVID-19 activity to make decisions about congregational activities at Laurel Heights, 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.

Suspension of all in-person congregational activities. *	7-Day Avg Less Than 200
12 step programs may continue at our discretion.	Doubling Rate Greater Than 7 days
The LHUMC Wednesday dinner is suspended until further notice.	Trend of Decreasing Cases (7-day averages over a week)
	(any 2 of 3)

\*Exceptions in special circumstances may be considered and granted by the ad hoc committee.

## Meditation through the Psalms

**Join us on Facebook or Instagram every Thursday as our Lay Leader, Katie Myers, leads us through a meditation on the lectionary Psalm for the week.**

**This week we will meditate on the words from Psalm 139:1-12, 23-24.**

*© LORD, you have searched me  
and known me.*

Psalm 139:1

# The Aspects of Waiting

Rev. Jim Carr, Minister of Pastoral Care

Henri Nouwen identifies two aspects of waiting in his article, "A Spirituality of Waiting: Being Alert to God's Presence in Our Lives." The first aspect is the waiting **for** God. The context for his thoughts on this is given in the first two chapters of Luke, the story of Jesus' birth. The second aspect is the waiting **of** God. The framework for this is provided by the final chapters of Luke, the story of Jesus' death and resurrection.



**In our waiting for God**, we hear of people who have received a promise. Something has been given to them, and like a seed it is growing within them. They are moving toward something that is more than they have now. The people of promise are Elizabeth, Zechariah, and Mary. Nouwen identifies the nature and practice of this kind of waiting in the following ways:

*there is a sense of promise;  
waiting is active;  
waiting requires patience;  
waiting is open-ended;  
there is hope that the promises of the promise-giver will be fulfilled;  
those who wait provide a space for each other where they can wait together;  
alertness to the word prepares a place within us for the promise to give life.*

**In God's waiting for us**, we see that God waits to learn what we will do with the promise given to us. The focus is upon Jesus as he waits and prays in the Garden of Gethsemane. The good news of God's promise has been offered. "God reveals himself in Jesus as the one who waits for our response." When Jesus is handed over:

*he changes from the one who acts to the one who is acted upon;  
even in being acted upon, Jesus knows who he is, he lives out his vocation;  
in living out his vocation, he fulfills the promise at an even deeper level, resurrection.*

The significance of this for us is to know that when we experience our own Gethsemane, and we face life events where we are not in control, and we feel both dread and hope about the outcome, the God who waits is present. There are times when we are acted upon by people, events, culture, illness, and disease. Further, in order to receive the help we need, we must allow others to give us the care that we are unable to offer ourselves.

*We change from the ones who act to the ones who are acted upon.*

*But even as we are acted upon, we can recall whose we are, and that God is waiting for our response.*

*In being true to the promise, we live out our vocation to become who God promises us we can be.*

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 learn to 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. And so the spirituality of waiting is not simply our waiting for God. It is also participating in God's own waiting for us and in that way coming to share in the deepest purity of love which is God's LOVE."

**Further, in order to receive the help we need,  
we must allow others to give us the care  
that we are unable to offer ourselves.**

LOVE

# Experience Our Worshipping Community Online

## Wednesday Prayer Gathering

Though scattered, we are gathered  
in prayer in the name of the one  
whose love and belonging nothing can  
separate us from: Christ our Lord.  
Today (7/15) from 6:30 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

VOLUNTEER TO BE A  
VIRTUAL READING BUDDY!

SIGN UP TO BE A  
PT PEN PAL!

IMMIGRANT  
RIGHTS

LOS DERECHOS  
DE INMIGRANTES

### Equal Justice Initiative

In the American criminal justice system, wealth—not culpability—shapes outcomes. Many people charged with crimes lack the resources to investigate cases or obtain the help they need, leading to wrongful convictions and excessive sentences, even in capital cases.

Racial disparities persist at every level from misdemeanor arrests to executions. The “tough on crime” policies that led to mass incarceration are rooted in the belief that black and brown people are inherently guilty and dangerous—and that belief still drives excessive sentencing policies today.

[Click here to view Resources for Criminal Justice Reform.](#)

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

### Sermon Audio

Listen to the full sermon from Rev. Diana Phillips here:

[Taking root](#)



# Project Transformation

## July 2020 Mission of the Month



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!

Click the picture below to  
learn about *Sun Safety*



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

## Birthday Blessings July 17-23

7/17  
Cindy Birdwell  
Roxane Darnell  
Jack Girdley

7/18  
Carrie Clemens

7/20  
Clay Campbell  
Bill Myers  
Sammy Stange  
Delores Carson



7/21  
Samuel Parsley  
Patrice Law

7/22  
Joshua Stock  
Drayton Bodner

7/23  
Joe Barfield

## 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!!!

## Memorial Gifts

### *General Memorial Fund*

In memory of Mr. & Mrs. Reeves Smith, given by Ken & Susan Thomas.

### *Pastor's Discretionary Fund*

In memory of Mr. & Mrs. Reeves Smith, given by Sue Hall.

In memory of Truman Smith, given by Sue Hall.

In memory of Larry Thompson Sr., given by Sue Hall.

In memory of Henry Birdwell, given by Sue Hall.

### *Choir Robe Fund*

In memory of Beverly Smith, given by Deanne & Mike Trodden.

In memory of Henry Birdwell, given by Deanne & Mike Trodden.

### *Church Under the Bridge*

In memory of Diane Boehme, given by Sue Hall.

## JOYS AND CONCERNS

**Healing:** William Beuhler, Ellen Evans, Vicki Ferguson, Estelle Hogan, Larry Howard, Mary Howard, Gracie Huron, Marvin Huth, Jane Manning, Sandra Ojeda-Medina, Noe Medina, Shelley McMullen, May O'Neal, Dean Pearson, Louise Rawlings, Doug Semmes, Bonnie Surber, Viola and Juanita (*sister and niece of Diane Halim*), Bob and Mary Best (*Tom Kurtz*), Kat Shapiro (*Juanita Souder*), Ken Minter (*Thomas Sanders*).

**Those Who Mourn:** Ann Wheeler on the loss of her brother, Winn Alley.

**God's Presence:** All friends and families of Laurel Heights (*Melissa Nardi*), 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@mylhmc.org](mailto:prayers@mylhmc.org) or calling (210) 733-7156.

## Giving to Laurel Heights

### *Online Gifts:*

Please visit our website, [www.laurelheights.org/donate](http://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](mailto: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](http://www.laurelheights.org)