The Messenger

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Losses, Graces, and New Beginnings

Steve Haney, Laurel Heights member, COVID-19 Response team

Connections define us as human beings. Our very sense of self is the product of a cerebral symphony, and our worldview the consequence of the personal interactions that create and sustain our sense of a beloved community.

In this time of Covid isolation, I have been weaned of many of those reinforcing personal connections, and I count that as both the loss and grace of the experience. It is loss for obvious reasons: separation from my choir family, segregation from my church identity, and isolation from the community of friends with whom I am at ease and comfortable. But a temporary withdrawal from routine and comfort is what academics call a sabbatical . . . an opportunity to reassess, to recenter, and to reimagine.

To paraphrase Proust, the real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in seeing old landscapes with new eyes. This forced Covid isolation has untethered me from a self-satisfied status quo. It has opened my eyes to how incredibly privileged my life has been and still is. What I have seen as blessings in my life, the deserved outcome of hard work in a land that rewards independence and perseverance, have been in many ways the product of opportunity and benefit denied to others and often on the back of their suffering. The mantra of these days is "Black Lives Matter." They have always mattered, but my eyes have been focused elsewhere. I see the old landscape now with new eyes, and it will never look the same again.

God's grace is said to be a freely given beneficence, but it is not always a comfort in my experience. I believe it is sometimes to be found in the voice of introspection that asks: "Is it I, Lord?" Am I a party to subliminal bias that corrupts any hope of loving my neighbor as myself? Seeing ourselves as being a part of what is wrong with the world can free us to transform our lives and walk in more expansive pastures. With you, I want to be a part of a revitalized community when we return. I want us . . . I want me . . . to be a catalyst for change in how our community sees itself. My hope is that we may, ourselves, be a grace note for our city, inspiring an inwardly directed search for privilege bound delusions that deflect our love of neighbor toward maintaining the status quo. We can't make our community better if we don't make it different. And the gift of that change is true communion where all are honored, respected, and loved.

Grace Notes & Possibilities: A Time of Congregational Sharing

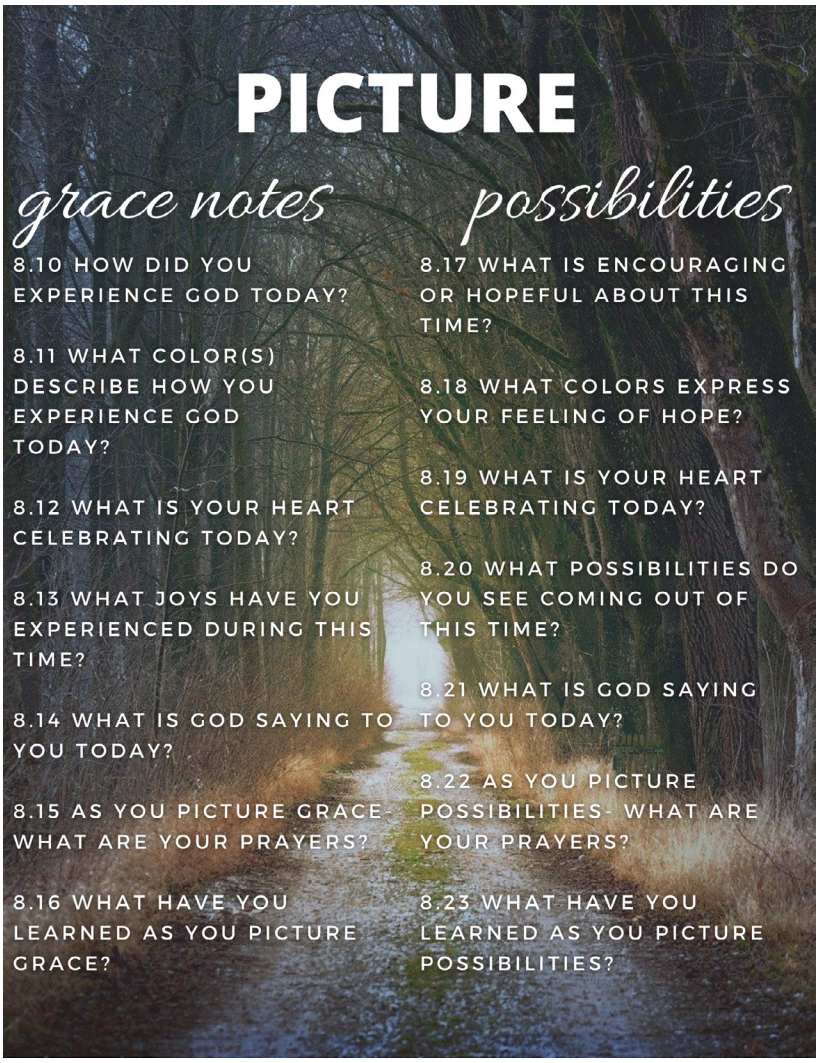
We invite you to attend our final Zoom gathering to share your "yeses" in this "no" season and your hopes and yearnings for our congregation as we move forward through this challenging time and beyond:

Friday, August 14th @ 10AM

Email ejackson@mylhumc.org, put **GNP ZOOM** in the subject line and tell Elizabeth you plan to attend.

In addition to the Zoom gatherings, you are also invited to share your expressions with us on Facebook and Instagram. We will post a question each day in August for you to share pictures of what it means to picture loss, picture grace, and picture possibilities for our world and the church.
Tag your pictures #LHGraceNotes to see them as a collection.

To take the online Grace Notes & Possibilities Survey, click here!



As we listen to God and each other
we invite you to share your photos, artwork, reflections to the daily prompts on Facebook or Instagram.
Each day we will post a question with the theme and focus identified above.
Don't want to post- not a problem!
These prompts can also be used for your daily reflection and prayer practices too.

Our hope is that these prompts will guide us as we identify the gifts we have experienced during this difficult season (grace notes) and the possibilities for us and our church as we move forward together.

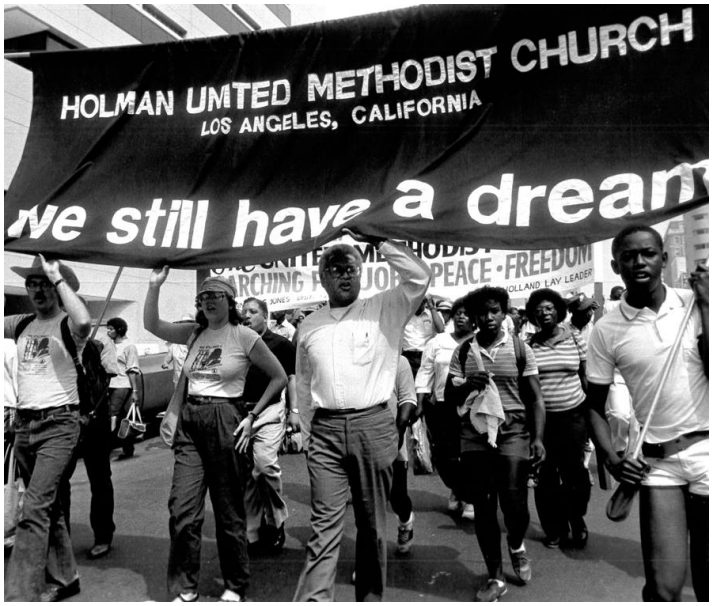
Town Hall:
Seasoned leaders discuss dismantling racism

Join the conversation ***here*** and on Facebook,
Wednesday, August 19,
1 pm ET | 12 pm CT | 11 am MT | 10 am PT.

The work of dismantling racism is not new; now more than ever we need to be reminded of the work that has moved us to today's reality—and to name where we still need to go.

Join us on Wednesday, August 19, 2020 at 12:00 p.m. CST/1:00 p.m. EST as we listen to four leaders in the movement discuss their experiences in confronting racism. These leaders will name the parallels and distinctions between their historical work and how today's anti-racism and anti-oppression movements are different, as well as their insights about the church's role in this work, where the church must lead the prophetic call to justice and the tension between different approaches to this work.
Moderator Erin Hawkins will lead the conversation.

Our hope is that this Town Hall series will help equip the United Methodist Church as we engage in our anti-racism work across the Connection.



The Rev. James Lawson (center) leads a group from Holman United Methodist Church in Los Angeles. Photo by John C. Goodwin, United Methodist Board of Global Ministries.

Emerging leaders town hall:
Don't miss our conversation with a panel of young United Methodist leaders on Wednesday, August 26. They will discuss strategies for changing the world and encouragement for partners in this work. Learn more.

How Can We Know the Way?

Rev. Jim Carr, Minister of Pastoral Care

At the Last Supper in the Gospel of John, Jesus tells his disciples, "You know the way to the place where I am going." Thomas immediately asks, "We don't know where you are going. How can we know the way?" Jesus replies, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life."

This interchange between Thomas and Jesus reminds me when I seek the truth about Jesus that my questions say more about me than about Jesus. I think Albert Schweitzer says something similar in *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*. In the final chapter on "Results" he says, "The study of the Life of Jesus has had a curious history. It set out in quest of the historical Jesus, believing that when it had found Him it could bring Him straight into our time as a Teacher and Saviour." "And yet we modern theologians are too proud of our historical method." "There was a danger that we would offer to people a Jesus who was too small, because we had forced him into conformity with our human standards and human psychology."

This interchange between Thomas and Jesus reminds me when I seek the truth about Jesus that my questions say more about me than about Jesus.

"But the truth is, it is not Jesus as historically known, but Jesus as spiritually arisen within people, who is significant for our time and can help it. Not the historical Jesus, but the spirit which goes forth from Him and in the spirits of human beings strives for new influence and rule, is that which overcomes the world. In proportion as we have the Spirit of Jesus we have the true knowledge of Jesus."

The experience of the earliest Christians was that the risen Lord was present and working among them in the Holy Spirit. The resurrection brought transformation and spiritual power into their lives. I think this is what Schwietzer means when he says, "it is . . . Jesus as spiritually arisen within people who is significant for our time and can help it." I believe this is as true in 2020 as it was in the early 1900's, or in any age.

August 2020 Mission of the Month: Interfaith Welcome Coalition

"Flip-flops, tomatoes, chicken, plantains, eggs, and cassava flour," what do these items have in common? All were received with great joy by refugee families recently released by Immigration Customs and Enforcement from south Texas detention centers. Because of the COVID-19 crisis and the ruling of federal Judge Dolly Gee, children and their families must be released from immigration detention centers. The city of San Antonio is providing shelter with all other assistance coming from the Interfaith Welcome Coalition.

Rev. and Mrs. Escamilla recently volunteered with the Interfaith Welcome Coalition to help asylum seekers from Angola, Haiti, and the Congo while they remain in quarantine in San Antonio. Liz reports that Pastor Paul washed clothes, she collaborated on care of the children, and together they emptied the trash, greeted each of the six families in quarantine, and prayed for the people. Each family's life has been filled with violence and suffering, and the IWC volunteers seek to minister to their needs. Laurel Heights members and friends who wish to help should text Moon Sanchez Brand at 210-325-669. Strict CDC quarantine procedures will be followed.

URGENT AND NECESSARY

"I was a stranger and you welcomed me." *Matthew 25:35*

Federal Judge Dolly Gee has ruled that children can no longer be held in U.S. immigration detention centers that have outbreaks of COVID-19. Immigration and Customs Enforcement is now releasing children with their families from the centers in Dilley and Karnes City. The families coming to San Antonio will be in quarantine for 14 days.

Our compassionate city will provide housing, but volunteers are needed to help with the following ***NO CONTACT tasks***:

1. ***On-site volunteers***: text 210-325-6690, Moon Brand.
2. ***Food and Supplies***: dawnsilvius@gmail.com.
3. ***Laundry***: text (210) 325-6690, Moon Brand.

PLUS, there is ***need for an ON-SITE MANAGER***, a PAID position. Text Matt Neal at (210) 643-8326 . Families from Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, and Central America are among those sheltered in San Antonio.

Click here to educate yourself on Immigrant Rights.

Back to School Drive Thru Parade!

Start the new school year with a smile and a wave and a blessing!

Saturday, August 15th from 9:30-10:15 AM

Join us as we celebrate new beginnings and a new school year!
Drive through the Woodlawn parking lot (**enter from Mistletoe!**) and say hello to Ms. Laura and Pastor Paul!
We will have a bag of goodies for each child including a blessed backpack tag.

OPEN HEARTS. OPEN MINDS. OPEN DOORS.

The Kairos Shalom Sunday school class wrote 270 thank you notes to healthcare workers at our neighborhood hospital—Metropolitan Methodist. Alice Gannon is the president of the board for the Methodist Healthcare Ministries and helped to coordinate the gift of notes and snacks for the staff caring for Covid patients.

Alice Gannon with Alejandro (Alex) Romero (left), Chief Operating Officer of Methodist Hospital Metropolitan and Howard Garner (right), Director of Business Development.

COVID-19 UPDATES

Current Level: Red

- Sunday worship and other gatherings will continue in online formats only.
- 12 step programs may continue at our discretion.
- The LHUMC Wednesday dinner is suspended until further notice.

We will review the current status weekly and update the congregation on Wednesdays. 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.

Liz Escamilla is collecting masks again.

E-mail elescamilla96@gmail.com
if you are interested.

Laurel Heights Online

Sunday Worship Live-stream @ 8:30 a.m.

Following the live-stream, the service will be reviewed, repaired, and replaced to ensure a satisfactory viewing experience. The repaired service will be available for sharing and viewing on Vimeo, Facebook, and our website.

Sunday School

Children's Sunday School will continue to be posted to Vimeo, Facebook, and our website Sunday mornings at 10:00 a.m.
Adult Sunday School classes meet by Zoom. Call (210) 733-7156 to find out more!

Wednesday Prayer Gathering

Though scattered, we are gathered in prayer in the name of the One from whose love and belonging nothing can separate us.
Today (8/12) 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**

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 67.

Birthday Blessings
August 12-19

8/12
Abigail Sanders
Breanna Swientek
Reanna Swientek
Geoffrey Waite

8/13
Pat Moss

8/14
Lynette Allen
Houston Goodpaster

8/15
Valerie Morton
Henry Taylor

8/17
Kristen Pratt

8/18
Hugh Lindsey
Susie Dvoracek
Jacob Guven
Matt Davis

8/19
Bo Lee
Selena Gonzales

Sermon Audio

Listen to the full sermon from here:

Worshiping in a boat

LAUREL HEIGHTSUMC

zoom

www.laurelheights.org *Facebook.com* *Vimeo.com*

Click on these buttons to view video tutorials on setting up and personalizing your Realm Connect account!

REALM CONNECT To Belong!

More videos to come!

Create Your Account

Manage Passwords, Payments, and Notifications

Edit Your Profile and Privacy Settings

Laurel Heights United Methodist Church
Finance Committee Update
Y-T-D 2020

Budget Receipts:	July	Y-T-D
Contributions Received	$53,588.34	$438,168.10
Other Receipts	$7,442.80	$55,673.47
Total Budget Receipts:	$61,031.14	$493,841.57
Budget Expenses:	$72,344.99	$505,228.51
Ahead (Behind):	-$11,313.85	-$11,386.94
PPP Loan Proceeds	$0.00	$101,074.93
Trustee Loan		$75,000.00
Paid 1/1/19		($20,000.00)
Balance Due:		$55,000.00

JOYS AND CONCERNS

Healing: Ella Sanders, Geoffrey Waite, Paul Parsons, Diane Halim, Larry Howard, Mary Howard, Gracie Huron, Marvin Huth, Annalynn Jackson, Lucian Manchester, Jane Manning, May O'Neal, Sandra Ojeda-Medina, Doug Semmes, Stephanie (*Dale Dorsey*), Debbie Regalado and children, Javian and Malorie.

Those Who Mourn: Family of Gloria Sparkman on her passing. Family of Gloria Pittman on her passing (*Liz Escamilla*). Deb Spading on the loss of her father, Charles Dunford.

God's Presence: All teachers returning to school, 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