



# The Messenger

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## **Grace Notes and Possibilities: The Work of Worship**

*Rev. Paul L. Escamilla*



Perhaps the main subject of discussion in our Grace Notes and Possibilities sharing was congregational worship—how we miss it, how we’ve adapted it (and how we ourselves have tried with greater or lesser success to adapt to its adaptations!), and how we hope for the day when we can again gather for worship in “the temple of our familiar.”

As your pastor, my primary charge is to lead the congregation in the worship of God. In this context, I have experienced a mix of emotions in seeking to fulfill that role: tremendous pride in the exceptional efforts of our gifted and agile staff, worship planners, and participants; deep gratitude for a patient and encouraging congregation; and a heavy sense of responsibility when virtually transmitted or in-person worship have been experienced as less than ideal, or worse, deeply unsatisfying.

In the coming week we plan to return to the sanctuary for Sunday worship in measured numbers. Those who attend will wear masks, refrain from greeting each other with a holy kiss or even a handshake, and avoid singing. Once again, the prospect of an unsatisfying experience looms large.

In this context, I have found myself returning to a basic understanding of the nature of worship. “Liturgy,” a word particularly important to the Laurel Heights congregation, is drawn from the Greek *leiturgia*, “the work of the people” to praise and worship God. Work, as we all know, is sometimes rewarding, other times tedious, on a good day satisfying, but often toilsome. What if we thought of worship in that way—not as an experience that would always delight us, but as our work? To frame this another way, when we go on a mission trip, the objective is to work. Sometimes the work is pleasant and instantly rewarding; but often it is strenuous and exhausting. At the end of such trips someone will invariably say, with other ragged, blistered, sunburned missionaries nodding in agreement, “I got more out of it than I gave.”

Worship is our residential mission trip, in which work is understood as an essential part of the endeavor. Our hope is that, having applied a generous measure of discipline and grace to attending a service either online or—with masks and without hugs—in the sanctuary, we will come away from that act of worship as we would a successful mission trip.

The joyful work of worshipping the living God awaits us. Join me on the mission trip, ready for work that will surely be an effort, but to leave us sensing that we received more from it than we gave.

Grace and peace.



## EXPANDING PERSPECTIVES, EXISTENTIAL FOCUS OF VISION

Rev. Jim Carr, Minister of Pastoral Care

*Jesus and the Disinherited* is a soul-probing work by Howard Thurman. He produced many more books than this in his rich and accomplished career, but this work made a deep mark upon the determined effort of an oppressed people to become free. It provided a perceptive and guiding social and spiritual analysis. It sank deep spiritual roots which withstood intense pressures. And it sustained a people whose backs were against the wall.

At Rochester Theological Seminary, George Cross, a Professor of Systematic Theology, became a committed mentor who had a deep personal interest in Thurman. On the eve of Thurman's graduation, Cross said to him, "No white man has the right to say this, for he does not know what it is to be a Negro, but all social questions are temporary questions. They are a part of the total growth of the race to maturity. If a man's energy goes into social problems, when that is no longer relevant, his work is done. You, Howard, should address yourself to the timeless hunger of the human spirit. Doing so, your greatest capacities will be released." This was a shaping influence for Thurman's vocation and identity.

Rufus Jones was a prominent Quaker mystic at Haverford college. Thurman requested and became "a special student of Philosophy" to study with Jones, who became his teacher and mentor. Jones took Thurman into the historical, philosophical, and experiential foundations of mysticism. "Jones not only disclosed for Thurman the necessary and renewing aspects of mysticism in religion but he linked these aspects to world conditions. More specifically, he offered a linkage which [author's italics] gave Thurman the vision of how spiritual power could address the conditions that oppressed him as a black man in America."

Thurman's frame of reference was now expanded beyond protests and marches. He recognized a larger quest. He set out to seek an answer for "...the hunger for meaning which is not satisfied by political ideology and campaigns--a hunger which must be addressed if persons are to have the commitment and strength to participate in the arduous tasks of structural change." Thurman's spiritual quest led him to India, where he met Gandhi.

Sources: *Howard Thurman: the Mystic as Prophet*, Smith; *Jesus and the Disinherited*, Thurman; *With Head and Heart*, Thurman.



When I arrived at Laurel Heights as your bookkeeper twenty-three years ago, you immediately embraced me with your love and support. I have good memories of working with outstanding co-workers and church members that are now my very dear friends. It means a lot to me that you have allowed me to be a part of the ministry of Laurel Heights while serving as your bookkeeper.

The celebration in worship on Sunday was very special. You graciously honored me. Thank you for the lovely photograph of the church. I was especially touched that so many added their well wishes to the mattee surrounding the picture. Elton and I took advantage of a good meal ...before the ink had time to dry on the food gift cards!

If I say "Thank You...Seventy Times Seven" does that translate to infinity? It should! I cannot adequately express my appreciation for everything Laurel Heights has done for me. Each of you has a place in my heart and soul that I will cherish forever.

Serving Him Together,  
Louise Dudley

*Thank you*



# In-Person Worship in the Sanctuary on September 27 11 am

## **Service Details**

On September 27<sup>th</sup> the worship service will be in the Sanctuary at 11:00 am only. Based on current health guidelines, there will be no congregational singing during the service. The service will be livestreamed at 11:00 am on [www.laurelheights.org](http://www.laurelheights.org) and Facebook and remain available to view afterward.

## **Limited Seating**

Seating will be limited to 50 people for the service and no assigned seating.

## **Reservations Required**

To sign-up online visit <https://reopen.church/r/zB6FJ5Ki> If you cannot use the online reservation form or to cancel your reservation, email [ejackson@mylhmc.org](mailto:ejackson@mylhmc.org) or call 210-733-7156.

If you reserve seating, you will receive an email from us at the end of the week with a confirmation of your reservation and additional details concerning Sunday morning. Please be sure to use a good email address when you reserve your seats.

## **Waiting List**

If all the seats are claimed, you may add your name to a waiting list by calling Elizabeth at 210-733-7156 and we will contact you if space becomes available.

## **Masks Required**

Masks are required at all times in the building. If you do not have a mask, we will have masks available for you.

## **Feeling Ill?**

If you have been experiencing symptoms such as fever, cough, sore throat, chills, or other signs of illness, please stay home.

## **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)

## A Study on Race and the Church

'We Are the Church Together: Racial Justice in the Church' will examine the stages and ways that the Methodist Movement has been faced with issues of race— sometimes impressively and sometimes not. We will navigate together schisms in the Church over race and examine ways that racism has caused stress in the Body of Christ and created opportunities for proclaiming justice. We will look at tears in the fabric of our denomination and annual conference. We will look into the mirror at our own congregation and finally into our own hearts. Don't come expecting a 'feel good' experience but come expecting to be changed!



This study is led by Byrd Bonner  
and held via Zoom  
Sunday September 20 and 27  
at 7 pm

For more information, please contact  
Laura Healy @ [lhealy@mylhumc.org](mailto:lhealy@mylhumc.org)

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/97107168193>

Meeting ID: 971 0716 8193

One tap mobile  
+13462487799,,97107168193# US  
(Houston)

Dial by your location  
+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)  
Meeting ID: 971 0716 8193

### Wednesday Prayer Service

Though scattered, we are gathered in prayer in the name  
of the One from whose love nothing  
can separate us.

September 16 from 6:30-7:00 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://www.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



Friday, September 18, 2020  
12:00 PM to 1:00 PM  
Via Zoom

Hab-i-tours are transitioning to an informational virtual tour—join us from the comfort of your home! The Hab-i-tour gives insight into the families, homes, and communities that Habitat is building in the San Antonio area. Led by Habitat staff, Hab-i-tours provide information about how interested groups and individuals in the community can become a part of Habitat's efforts in building affordable homes in San Antonio, whether through volunteering or monetary donations.

The tour will meet on Zoom for approximately 60 minutes.

Phone 210-223-5203 to register and receive the link for the Zoom tour.

### MISSION OF THE MONTH—Habitat for Humanity

We have an opportunity to help Habitat for Humanity build a house on Friday, September 25<sup>th</sup>. from 7:45am to 3:30 pm. Lunch will be provided. We can have up to 15 volunteers. All skill levels are welcome, transportation will not be provided by the church. If you would like to participate please call or email Jane Manning at 210-859-1639, [janem@aptreloctr.com](mailto:janem@aptreloctr.com). I will then provide you with all the details. Volunteering together provides a way for us to have fun together while pursuing a common goal, strengthening our community and empowering Habitat homeowners to build a better future for themselves. Please note, Habitat for Humanity leadership team is closely monitoring the Covid – 19 outbreak and the precautions governmental agencies are suggesting limiting the virus' spread. There is a list of precautions that I will be providing to each person who would like to participate.



Call Jane Manning at 210-859-1639 or email: [janem@aptreloctr.com](mailto:janem@aptreloctr.com).

### HELPING HANDS on Mission Service

**WHO?** You, individuals, small family/friends groups

**WHAT?** Helping Hands work days to verify UMCOR Flood Bucket contents ready for delivery to Hurricane Laura survivors.

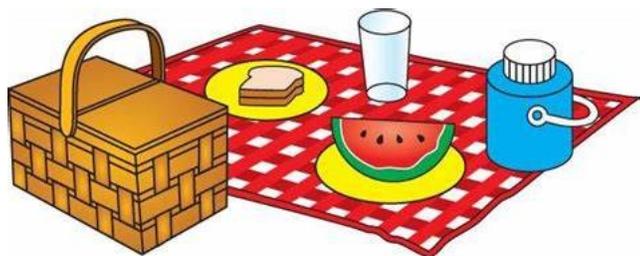
**WHERE?** Bishop Joel and Raquel Martinez Disaster open air warehouse, Kerrville, TX.

**WHEN?** 9:00 am Monday, September 14 to Saturday, September 19

Contact Judy Davis for additional details and to reserve a date for your mission work.

[Judymdavis43@gmail.com](mailto:Judymdavis43@gmail.com) 210-392-2282





**Thursday, September 24 at 11 am**

**SUPER ADULT DAY**

**PICNIC IN THE PARK-ing lot**

Bring a sack lunch or reserve one by Susan and park your car in the Woodlawn Parking Lot.

Enjoy some piano renderings by Geoffrey Waite.

We'll provide the dessert and cold water to drink. Munch your lunch in your car or sit outside on chairs provided at each parking place. Late September days are usually pleasant. After lunch we'll enjoy a Sing Song! Be sure and make a reservation to reserve a parking space and a lunch if you want us to provide one. Call 210-872-8031. Choose between Ham & Swiss Cheese or Roast Beef and Cheddar sandwich – served with deviled egg, cherry tomatoes, and package of chips. Cost \$5.00.

**Wednesday, September 30**

**9 am – 12 pm**

**Drive Through Flu Shot Clinic**



Call and make a reservation 210-872-8031– we will send you the paperwork to fill out in advance – and drive through the porte cochere on the Woodlawn Parking Lot. Walgreens will be there to administer flu shots as they have for the past several years. You won't have to get out of the car. They'll come to you. In this time of Covid 19 it is even more important to get your Flu Shot. Protect yourself and your family and your friends. Shots free for those on Medicare.

## **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](#).

**Checks:** Please mail to  
LHUMC, Attn: Bookkeeper,  
227 W. Woodlawn, SATX, 78212.

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



# 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) 974-1834 to find out more!

### September 20—27

9/16  
Doss McDavid

9/20  
Willa Jo Beuhler  
Jake Landers  
Lori Ann Ramirez

9/21  
Joaquin Castro  
Beth Furber

9/24  
Alexis Berain  
Marjorie Hagy  
Brooke Rivas

9/25  
James Aderhold  
Marjorie Hugo

9/26  
Birdie Landers

9/27  
Billie Arredondo  
Bonnie Surber



### JOYS AND CONCERNS

**Healing:** Jeanne Coder, Janie and John Ervin, Concha Garces (*Teresa Garces*), John David Griffin, Larry Howard, Gracie Huron, Marvin Huth, Lucien Manchester, Jane Manning, Sandra Ojeda Medina, May O'Neal, Doug Semmes, Brenda Stewart, Nora Winkler

**Those Who Mourn:** John and Janie Ervin, on the loss of his son, James, Family of Gary Locklear, Home Missioner from North Carolina Conference (Judt Davis)

**God's Presence:** Students - Elementary, Middle School, High School, College - face to face and remote, 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.

### Nominations in Process

The Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development has begun its work in identifying and inviting partners and leaders for various church committees. If you have an interest in serving in some capacity with a board, committee, or work area, see attached for that listing for the current year, and reach out to the chair of the Nominating Committee, our senior pastor, Paul Escamilla, or the vice-chair, our lay leader Katie Myers. You can also contact Elizabeth Jackson, our administrative assistant, to share your interest.

Thank you for all the ways you say yes to following Christ in ministries of serving and leading.



Needing help with our new church database? There are also videos on the church website to assist you.

Please call Elizabeth at 210-733-7156 if you have any questions.

