



The Messenger

November 11, 2020
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A weekly publication of Laurel Heights United Methodist Church

Stars in the night

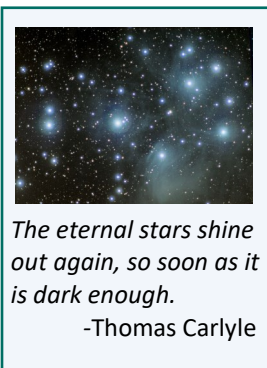
Rev. Paul L. Escamilla

This past week Liz and I traveled to a remote area of Big Bend National Park, where we hiked, enjoyed sunrises and sunsets, and marveled at the stars. Big Bend, as it happens, is one of the areas most free of ambient light in this region of the country, making it ideal for stargazing. As many of you know, in such remote areas the nighttime stars turn out in numbers, putting on a show for free.



I'm always reminded on a star-studded night of Thomas Carlyle's axiomatic words: *The eternal stars shine out again, so soon as it is dark enough.* They are words I've quoted more often in the last year than in my entire life previously, and always in reference to you—the congregation of Laurel Heights United Methodist Church.

The year has brought an immeasurable number of challenges to our world, our country, our community, and our congregation, including a pandemic, social unrest and a national soul-searching around issues of racial equity, a deeply divisive political environment, and economic strain. Through them all you have proven even-keeled, flexible, compassionate, patient, stalwart, agile, creative, and generous. I have watched our staff and lay leadership rise to meet the challenges we've faced with poise, intelligence, good spirit, and tremendous resourcefulness. In the midst of a host of uncertainties you have manifested a deep sense of assurance both that our lives and our life together are in God's hands, and that vexing times in particular call the church to offer hope and good news to the world.



The eternal stars shine out again, so soon as it is dark enough.

-Thomas Carlyle

As I see you lead and serve, give and worship, imagine and create in all the ways you have through this arduous time, I am both honored and humbled to be your pastor, deeply inspired by you for my own leadership and service among you. My friends in Christ, thank you.

The expressions of your faith and faithfulness, like the stars under a Big Bend sky, are too many to name. Let me mention one recent development: In response to our Giving Hope focus, with its invitation to lend financial support the mission and ministries of Laurel Heights in the coming year, so far *nearly half of you* have increased your commitment from the current year. I don't believe I have ever witnessed such a sweeping response of love, support, and hopefulness.

Thank you, Laurel Heights, for all the ways you are living out the gospel call to love and serve God and your neighbor—both in season and out. You have been among the stars, always in the sky, but in this “nighttime” of a year shining out once again.

Grace and peace.

Notes from the Faith Journey



On Sunday, November 1st, I attended the 25th anniversary celebrating the installation of the Christ Statue at First United Methodist Church in Corpus Christi. "It Is I" became a reality when I served the congregation as the Senior Pastor. My return to First Church marked my first visit in 23 years. My warm and gracious reception stood in marked contrast to my departure in October of 1996. At that time, I was forced to resign my pulpit, because I was outed as a gay man. While I was at that time a non-practicing homosexual and had kept faith both with the *Discipline* and my former wife, that ultimately did not matter. In the span of eight days, my seven-year pastorate ended. Suddenly I was thrust into a frightening new world. With no warning, I suddenly had no income and no place to live--my family and I had resided in the church parsonage. My marriage was also over. Dear friends did not speak to me. As a fifth generation Methodist pastor, I felt personally devastated and professionally bereft.

After spending six months with my brother and family in Kentucky, I returned to Corpus Christi and moved in with my parents. I began work as a petroleum landman in a local firm, trying very hard to learn a totally new job. A year after my return to Texas, I suffered a near-fatal heart attack. My boss gave me CPR and miraculously saved my life before I successfully underwent by-pass surgery. When I recovered, that was the beginning of a true walk in the wilderness--working twelve jobs over the next five years in an effort to keep body and soul together, as well as pay child support. During that period, I found my way to the United Church of Christ, an Open and Affirming denomination. When I became a UCC pastor in full standing, I applied to become a local pastor--willing to go anywhere in the country.

By the year 2000, I had been waiting for a year-and-a-half for my phone to ring. I was working five part-time jobs simultaneously. I was as discouraged as I have ever have been. I vividly remember one afternoon during that time dragging myself to my neighborhood HEB in Corpus. As I walked to the store, a man got out of his car up ahead and started walking ahead of me. On the back of his t-shirt were the words from Jeremiah 29: "For I know the plans that I have for you...to give you a future and a hope." On Consecration Sunday, Pastor Paul preached on this text. Afterwards I wrote him a note and said that beloved scripture, that parking lot epiphany, gave me a second wind. Never again would I ever feel so low. Six months later, a call came through from a UCC congregation in Bangor, Maine. I stayed nineteen years. A future and a hope indeed!

--Mark Allen Doty

Giving Hope

Your support is key to helping Laurel Heights provide many ministries to our church and community. We know that things get busy around this time of year – if you have not completed a pledge card for 2021, please take a minute to indicate your plans for Laurel Heights financially in the coming year.

You may pledge online by visiting
our website

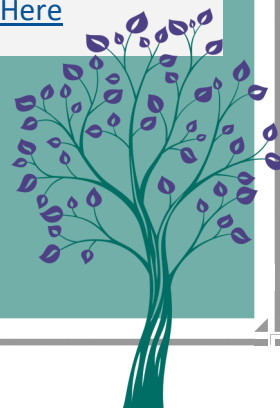
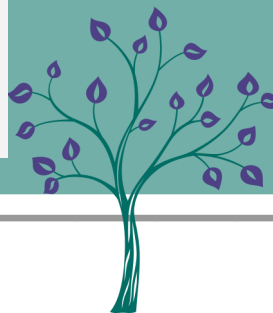
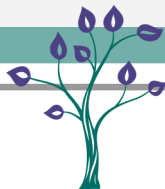
<https://www.laurelheights.org/give/>

or

email our bookkeeper, Amy Caldwell,
at acaldwell@mylhumc.org

Link to the 2021 Estimate
of Giving/Pledge Card:

[Click Here](#)

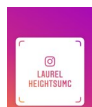


As we look towards Thanksgiving in the coming days, please consider your church family among those things for which you are thankful. Taking the time to offer your support of Laurel Heights in this way is greatly appreciated!

Contact Us

To reach the office staff by phone,
please call (210) 733-7156.

For an appointment with
Yvonne Garcia, RN,
our Wesley Nurse,
please call (210) 272-7921.



www.LaurelHeights.org

*Lord, in your mercy, hear our
PRAYER*

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

LHUMC YOUTH

Join us in November!



Join us!

**November 14:
South Texas Maize**

Hondo, Texas
12 pm to 5 pm
Meet in the LHUMC parking
lot at 12 pm to ride in
the church bus.

**November 28:
Flashlight Scavenger
Hunt & Labyrinth**

6:30 pm to 9 pm
@ Covenant Baptist Church
19204 FM RD 2252
San Antonio, Texas

Questions

Please contact Marisa Parker
@ 210-391-0685



Super Adults Thanksgiving and Long Life Celebration

Thursday, November 19 at 11 a.m.

Woodlawn parking lot



The Farmer's Almanac says the weather
will be in the 70's and sunny, so wrap up
and come for Thanksgiving Worship,
Long Life Celebration and Traditional
Thanksgiving Dinner.

Turkey & Dressing Cranberry Sauce
Sweet Potato Pattie Dinner Roll
Green Peas with Mushrooms
Pumpkin Roll Dessert Cost \$7.00

All person in their 90's
are special guests—no charge.

We do need Reservations.

Call 210-872-8031.

Please let us know if you are 90.

Thanksgiving Worship begins at 11 a.m.

Hymns Prayers Scripture Thanksgiving message by our pastor, Rev. Paul Escamilla

Special Music by Geoffrey Waite and Chancel Choir Members





Have you ever wondered

who takes care of preparing the sanctuary for worship? Who polishes the candlesticks or changes the cloths on the altar to the liturgical season color? Are you curious to learn about liturgical seasons? The Altar Guild would love to share their knowledge with you! The upcoming workdays would be a great opportunity to learn more about the Altar Guild!

Call the church office @ 210-733-7156 for more information.

ALTAR GUILD WORK DAYS

Saturday, November 21 at noon

Cleaning the sanctuary and polishing the brass to prepare the church for the Thanksgiving and Advent season.

Saturday, December 5 at 9:00 am

Decorating the chrismon tree and hanging the wreaths along the sides of the Sanctuary.

Saturday, December 12 at 10:00 am

Sunday, December 20 at noon



ALTAR GUILD

Memorial Gifts

General Memorial Fund

In memory of Kitty Jenkins given by Jane Jenkins

In memory of Jeanne Espinoza given by Beatrice Espinoza

Music Fund

In memory of Rachel Castano given by Elizabeth Castano

AV Fund

In memory of Lydia Powell given by Geoffrey Waite

Honorarium Gifts

Crop Walk

In honor of Clyta Coder given by Willa Jo and William Beuhler



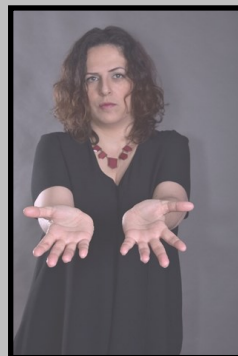
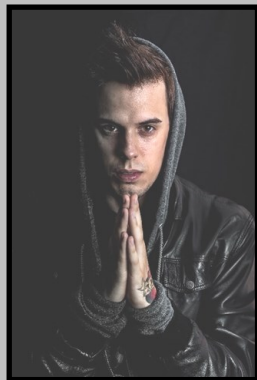
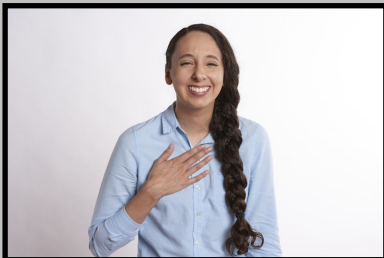
Katie Myers, Lay Leader

Friends, how are you? Really? Are you tired? Are you hopeful? Are you freshly, keenly aware of the pain and wounds we are carrying as a country? There isn't a person I know, who hasn't been bearing the weight of it all in one way or another. Some bowed almost double. In the face of that, what can I say to you that isn't hopelessly inadequate or worse trite?

January 12, 2014 I broke my ankle in spectacular fashion. After the firefighters maneuvered me out of the backyard on a stretcher, I found myself in the back of an ambulance with the immediate numbness starting to wear off only to be replaced by the fogginess of the painkiller they gave me. As I listening to the paramedics saying ominous words like "pulseless extremity", I started to become rather frightened. I remember lying there wishing that the EMT could somehow read my mind and know that I desperately wanted someone to just hold my hand. In the ER, as they prepared to sedate me so that they could fix the dislocation of my ankle and put all the bones back in place, a nurse showed up at my bedside with a consent form that detailed all the potential negative side effects of sedation up to and including death. Well that didn't make me feel any less frightened! Confessing my fear, she didn't offer reassurances but said, "I'll be right here with you holding your hand the whole time."

Recently, I encountered a story told by John Lewis in his memoir *Walking with the Wind*. During a violent storm, he and 15 other children took shelter in his aunt's tiny tin-roofed house. The storm was so powerful that the walls shook, and the corner of the house began to lift off the foundation. His aunt told all the children to stand up, form a line, and hold hands. Then holding hands, she had them walk toward the corner of the house that was lifting. Throughout the storm, they walked back and forth, hand in hand, holding the house down with just the weight of their small bodies.

Sometimes holding hands is all we can do. Presence is all we can offer. Presence is what God promises – I will be with you. You are not alone. We are not alone. Sometimes we mystically feel God's presence in real and tangible ways. Sometimes holding hands with one another **we** make God's presence real and tangible. And how do we hold hands in this season where holding each other's hands seems harder than it used to be – on so many levels? Maybe we begin like this...





Holiday Book Drive

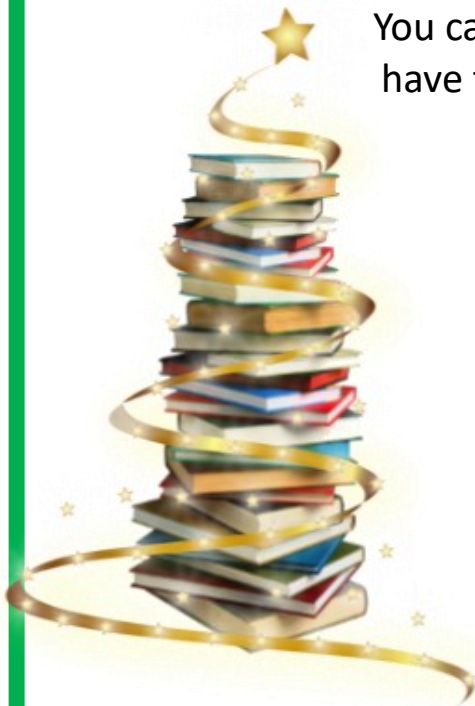
Is there a children's book you love that you always wanted to share? For the holidays this year we will be collecting new children's books for the Christian Assistance Ministries Christmas Store. For families in need, books can be a luxury. Every year CAM provides a festive store where their clients can choose toys, books and gifts for their children.

CAM's need is great.

They are hoping to collect 500 books by **Sunday, December 7th**.

You may donate new children's books to the church by dropping them off at the reception desk or call Laura Healy for other drop off options.

You can also order books from Amazon and have them shipped directly to the church.



**If you have any questions,
please contact Laura Healy
@ 210-364-7206**

Worship on Sunday, November 15

Our 11 a.m. service of worship will be livestreamed on our website and Facebook page ONLY.

Due to a rise in new cases of Covid-19 in our community we will not be gathering in person this Sunday. Please see our website <https://www.laurelheights.org/> for details regarding the Laurel Heights UMC surveillance metric.

Thank you for your patience, understanding, and vigilance.

Wednesday Prayer Service

November 11 from 6:30-7:00 p.m.

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



*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

Giving to Laurel Heights

Online Gifts: Please visit our website, , <https://www.laurelheights.org/give/>

Text to Give:

Please text "LHUMC" to 73256.

Checks: Please mail to

LHUMC, Attn: Bookkeeper 227 W. Woodlawn, SATX, 78212.



Volunteer

FIND
YOUR MISSION



There are so many ways to serve God in our community! Here are some of the opportunities for service available this week.

CHURCH UNDER THE BRIDGE

Donations of food, clothing and hygiene items are always needed. Drop off your donations at the following locations:

Church Under the Bridge
724 Chestnut
San Antonio TX 78202
Tues.,Thurs. and Sun. after 4pm.

Community Bible Church (South Parking Lot)
2477 North Loop 1604 E
San Antonio, TX 78232

MEALS ON WHEELS

Working with Meals on Wheels Families throughout the greater San Antonio region, you are doing much more than meal delivery. You are providing moments of personal connection – a smile, a heartfelt nod, a brief respite from the countless hours alone. Covid-19 precautions are in place.

<https://www.mowsatx.org/volunteer>

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

Habitat for Humanity is currently building homes and there are many different opportunities to get involved with this good work.

<https://www.habitatsa.org/get-involved/>

Laurel Heights Online

Sunday Worship Livestream @ 11:00 a.m.

The livestream will be available for viewing at <https://www.laurelheights.org/online-worship/>
and Facebook.com/LaurelHeightsUMC



Sunday School

Children's Sunday school videos can be viewed anytime at <https://vimeo.com/showcase/7425915/>

Adult Sunday school classes meet by Zoom.

Call (210) 974-1834 to find out more!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

November 19—November 25

11/19

Ann McGlone
Greyson Mitchell

11/20

Penelope Hemingway
Jim Redmond

11/21

Hailey Beuhler

11/22

Alan Kramer
Anna Lowry

11/23

Lawson Lange
Bert Shoopman

11/24

Roseann Dixon
Day McNeel
Meaghan Rohlf

11/25

Louise Rawlings
Lillie Shearrer

JOYS AND CONCERNS

Healing: Deanna Adams (*Shirley Carter*),
Billie Arredondo, Nathan Gaddis (*Bert Clayton*),
Concha Garces (*Teresa Garces*), Juan Garces (*Teresa Garces*),
Bobby and Ruth Garcia (*Clyta Coder*), Larry Howard,
Annalynn Jackson, Mary Grace Ketner (*Janice Clayton*),
Lucien Manchester, May O'Neal, Marjorie Parrigan,
Natalie, Richard and Roxie Rocha, Doug Semmes,
Bill Shepard (*Janice Clayton*), Nora Winkler.

God's Presence: for our country, parents, teachers and students both 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.



Realm Connect allows church members to view church news and upcoming events, share contact information with other members, and manage your giving. Please call Elizabeth Jackson @ 210-733-7156 or email ejackson@mylhumc.org for more information.

There are also videos on the church website to assist you.

