



The Messenger

November 25, 2020
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A weekly publication of Laurel Heights United Methodist Church

Serving up irony at Thanksgiving

Rev. Paul L. Escamilla, Senior Pastor

As I mentioned Sunday, the legend of the first Thanksgiving in 1621 paints a picture of a fledgling group of newcomers eking out a tenuous existence on the shores of North America. The Pilgrims were deeply beholden to their native hosts, who chose to make room in the neighborhood for these largely undesirable newcomers from distant worlds, and to help them, in spite of their reservations, to put bread on the table.



Alas, the story is laden with irony: a group of *Separatists* became, under duress, *unseparated*. Ex-patriots who had stiff-armed their native countries soon landed for all practical purposes in the embrace of Native Americans, without whom they could not hope to survive. Ever since, our national identity has had to blend any notions of independence and self-determination with other realities of interdependence and shared determination.

This year we need to add another layer of irony: in a Covid year we have *all* become Separatists, keeping our distance from virtually everyone. Stiff-arming one another is how, this Thanksgiving, we will show the love. By now we have had a bit of practice—Zoom, snail-mail letters, porch visits, phone calls, drive-by birthday celebrations, yard trick-or-treating, watch parties, and on and on. I've yet to commission a sermon to be written in the sky with an airplane, but that may be next.

In such a context, you, Laurel Heights, have been exceptionally agile and innovative in finding your way to each other—biological family, church family, friends, neighbors, and strangers—across the barriers of physical distance and masks. *Sans* hand shakes and hugs, you have nonetheless expressed your love and care for each other and the community in thoughtful and creative ways. In some cases Zoom has encouraged us to open our kitchens and living rooms to one another more transparently than ever we did when we could freely invite others over.

Yet challenges remain. My deepest burden is for those within our congregational and community circles we cannot see and do not hear from, who in the course of time have lost connection with the church or other sources of community support. Beyond our necessary separation ours is the work of extending our reach by more and more innovative means to ensure everyone has a place at the table of thanksgiving. For the gift of having a part in that gospel work as your senior pastor, I am deeply grateful to you all this Thanksgiving.

Grace and peace.



Come and See What God Has Done
Saturday, November 28 at 6:00 p.m.
on Facebook and our website.
Sunday, November 29 at 8:30 a.m.
Zoom watch party

Advent and Christmas at Laurel Heights



Come and See worship gatherings
Saturdays at 6 p.m. on our website and facebook
Sunday at 8:30 a.m. Zoom watch party , our website and facebook



Family Advent Gatherings via Zoom
4 p.m. four Sundays in Advent

Communion via Zoom
Sunday, December 6 at 5 p.m.

Sunday, December 13
Festival of Lessons and Carols at 7:00 p.m.
on our website and facebook

Monday, December 21
Visiting the Manger on the Longest Night 4 p.m.-7 p.m.

Thursday, December 24, Christmas Eve
Christmas Eve by Candlelight 4 p.m. -7 p.m. outdoors
Christmas Eve worship online

Come and See...

If ever we needed Advent, 2020 is the year. We need Advent to help us watch hopefully for what is to come. How can we be assured there will be joy even in the midst of these challenging days? As believers we have a marvelous history of what God has done in the past to assure us of God's current and future faithfulness.

Laurel Heights is home to energetic, compassionate and creative people who seek to fully worship God, but like most things COVID has made worship difficult. I was privileged to hear your hearts during Grace Notes and Possibilities and you miss seeing each other and sharing as a church family. Several also spoke tenderly about the pre-recorded worship experiences from the early months of staying at home.

With the approach of Advent your church leadership saw this as a perfect time to share a different online worship experience in addition to Sunday morning's livestream. Seven weeks of short, engaging videos to give you and your family an opportunity to see familiar faces and take a deep breath together as we worship and wait. Join in as we explore the Lectionary's Gospel texts to "Come and See What God has Done."

Knowing this is a time of both lament and expectation our focal word for the first week of Advent is "Watch." Katie Myers, Aubrey Reichman, Susie Guven, Jozlin Parker, Ann McGlone, Kiley Lange and I are enjoying connecting with members to co-create this unique opportunity to experience God in community. Beginning this Saturday at 6 p.m. you can join us to Come and See what God has Done!

Blessings,

Rev. Wyndee Holbrook

*Come
and
See...*



Notes from the Faith Journey



God Is Near

In thinking about this article, I prayed, "God, what is there to say ..." On November 14, 2020, at our Epworth Sunday school Zoom class; God gifted me with the idea for this article.

The lesson was on Joshua 4. Joshua was crossing the rolled-back-river-waters and had the people stack stones in the middle of the river bottom. He said it marked that they had come this way. When the waters began to flow again, on the banks, he had them stack stones at that point – so as generations past by, they would hear the story and know they had come that way before.

We were asked to think of two things that reminded us that God is near every day in our faith walk. The class shared many things, like their First Communion, times spent at Mount Wesley, gifts they received from good friends, flowers, sunlight that breaks through gloomy skies, hymns, songs, anthems, places and times where faith careers were called and decided on the top of a parking garage or a touch on the shoulder. It was very emotional for all of us – we shared, laughed, cried, and became closer in our faith journey. This sharing gave me a release of tension built up so far in 2020.

Laurel Heights is our stack of stones reminding us of other Faith Journeys.

Pastor Paul has been guiding us during this year to look at our laments, name people in prayer, and asked us individually and collectively to identify where we find Hope through Jesus Christ.

I challenge you to identify two things, places, events, or other ways that let you know God is near in you life.

Peace and Grace.

Bruce Davis



Pre-Charge Conference “Administrative Council Plus” meeting

This year we will not have a traditional charge conference. Our charge conference will be held with several other churches, will be on ZOOM and will be attended by representatives of the church’s leadership.

However, all church members are invited to attend a special meeting of the Administrative Council plus everyone else in the church who wishes to attend and participate. The meeting will be by ZOOM on Saturday, December 5 at 10 a.m. This will mirror what we ordinarily do in the charge conference and will be an opportunity for everyone in the church to participate in what normally occurs in the charge conference. The consensus from this meeting will be the basis of a consent agenda which will be presented to the District Superintendent at the charge conference.

The topics for the December 5 meeting (and ultimately the charge conference) include:

- 1) Clergy salary
- 2) The nominations slate, which is the election of lay leadership within our congregation. Approving this slate is one of the duties of the Church/Charge Conference and thereafter each committee is then accountable to the Church Conference. Each committee member makes decisions on behalf of the congregation, based on what they believe to be the purpose and vision of this church. The leadership by our laity is an expression of each member’s covenant to the local church body and The United Methodist Church to participate in the ministries of the church by our prayers, our presence, our gifts, our service, and our witness.
- 3) Ministry reports.

The decisions from this meeting will be presented as a packet at the Church Conference on December 10, along with reports of seventeen other churches in the Las Misiones District.

**So, please put the December 5 meeting on your calendar and look for the link to attend.
Thank you.**

Wednesday Prayer Service

November 25 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.

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



*A time to
to pray for one another
and the world...*



Super Adults

7 Super Adults volunteers delivered one of these cookies and a picture of a turkey to color with the crayons supplied as a Thanksgiving gift to their in-town membership. The Super Adults wish a Happy Thanksgiving to all.

We have much to be thankful for!



YOUTH

Join us!

**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**



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**



ALTAR GUILD WORK DAY

Saturday, December 5 at 9:00 am
Decorating the chrismon tree.



Poinsettias in December

I/ We wish to make a donation of \$15 to help purchase poinsettia plants to decorate and beautify the sanctuary in December. This gift is given...

in honor of _____

in memory of _____

My name: _____

Phone: _____

Include this coupon with your check made payable to Laurel Heights UMC and mail to LHUMC,
Attn: Bookkeeper, 227 W. Woodlawn, San Antonio, TX 78212.

Or pay online on our website: www.laurelheights.org

Deadline: Tuesday, December 8, 2020



Be Still



GRIEF & *the* HOLIDAYS

Grief during the holidays is always challenging, even more so this year. The season of the holidays renews memories, family ties, and traditions. We become painfully aware that our loved one is no longer present, and the pain of the loss is confused with the spirit of the season making it difficult for families to navigate.

Along with our personal sorrow, there is an added layer of collective grief and vulnerability. Losing the world as we have known it, combined with the sorrow of our loss causes us to grieve on many levels.

The current and real adversity of “less life and less places to go” pushes us to “Be Still.” How do we allow ourselves in this time of stillness to go deeper, finding our internal grounding and resilience?

This workshop will help identify internal and external resources enhancing resiliency to experience healing. It will help families who are grieving to better understand the grief process, how it affects us during the holidays and how we can use this special time to continue to heal.

Presenters:

Celeste Miller, MA, LPC, is currently the Bereavement Coordinator for Porter Loring Mortuaries. Having worked with end of life care as a hospice chaplain, she went on to further her education at the Episcopal Seminary of the Southwest, Austin, Texas, where she received a Master of Arts in Counseling. Celeste is a licensed professional counselor with the State of Texas and is also an active member of ADEC (Association of Death Education and Counseling).

Darwin L. Huartson, M.Div., BCC, currently serves as Porter Loring Community Coordinator and frequently gives presentations in the area of spirituality, caregiving, and bereavement education. A board-certified chaplain endorsed by the Association of Professional Chaplains, Darwin has worked as a hospital and hospice chaplain, and served as a parish pastor.

Dates for 2020 Virtual Workshops:

To encourage interactive discussion, each workshop will be limited to 25 people.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28:

11:30am – 1:00pm

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5:

6:30pm – 8:00pm

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11:

11:30am – 1:00pm

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 19:

6:30pm – 8:00pm

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2:

11:30am – 1:00pm

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10:

6:30pm – 8:00pm

Blue Christmas Service:

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13, 4:00pm

Porter Loring

& Christ Lutheran Church

(This virtual service has no limit.)

RSVP: To register, email

Kelsey Hankins at

KHankins@porterloring.com

or call **210.227.8221** with the date of your requested workshop.

Zoom information will be provided via email after registration is received and prior to workshop.

Price: FREE



Caring is Our Tradition.



Methodist Children's Home

Offering Hope Since 1890

LHUMC Mission of the Month December 2020

The primary goal of MCH community-based services is to strengthen families to help them provide a safe, stable, and healthy family environment.

Although our name has changed through the years and our program of care has adapted to the needs of those we serve, Methodist Children's Home (MCH) remains true to our mission to equip children, youth and families to flourish by offering hope through Christ-centered relationships, services and support. Founded in 1890, MCH is a nationally accredited, nonprofit childcare ministry affiliated with the six United Methodist Annual Conferences of Texas and New Mexico.

Throughout our history, we have been blessed with resources that have enabled us to provide the highest quality of care and facilities for children and youth. Today, MCH serves children and youth through residential programs on the Waco campus and Boys Ranch, and through foster care, transition services and a variety of services in communities throughout Texas and New Mexico.

The outreach office in San Antonio provides supportive services to families through preservation service and programs that offer resource information,

parenting support and education, case management services, service planning and advocacy.

Families receive services by contacting their local or closest MCH office directly or through referrals from other helping professionals.



Methodist Children's Home

Offering Hope Since 1890

Worship on Sunday, November 29

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

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.



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

CUB is currently collecting new or gently used hats, gloves and scarves to be given to anyone attending their Christmas night service. We will be conducting a drive through collection event for these items on Sunday, November 29 in the Woodlawn parking lot from 10:00AM to 1:00PM and on December 3 from 1:00-3:00PM.

HOLIDAY BOOK DRIVE

As our holiday giving this year, we are collecting new children's books for the Christian Assistance Ministries Christmas Store for their clients. Books can be delivered to the church during regular office hours.

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!



December 3—December 9

12/3

Cole Ruiz

12/4

Susie Guven

12/5

Juanita Souder
Penny Viola

12/6

Juniper Mendez

12/9

Sam Dibrell
John Largent

JOYS AND CONCERNS

Healing: Whit Birdsong (*Kitty Grantham*)

Chris Carr's family (*Jim Carr*), Nathan Gaddis (*Bert Clayton*),
Concha Garces (*Teresa Garces*), Juan Garces (*Teresa Garces*),
Marvin Gregory (*Carrie Clemens*),

Annalynn Jackson, Mary Grace Ketner (*Janice Clayton*),

Lucien Manchester, Mary McGuire (*Mary Verette*),

May O'Neal, Marjorie Parrigan, Richard Rocha, Doug Semmes,
Bill Shepard (*Janice Clayton*),

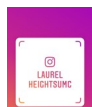
Those who mourn: Mary Verette on the death of
her cousin, Mary Lou Hildebrand.

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.



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.