



# The Messenger

December 2, 2020  
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*A weekly publication of Laurel Heights United Methodist Church*

## **Watching for the Light: The Beholder Wanting**

*Rev. Paul L. Escamilla, Senior Pastor*

A few autumns ago I found myself at the end of a bike ride with dusk approaching faster than I anticipated. Then I remembered that the clocks had been turned back several days earlier, and the days were growing dark sooner. I arrived back at my car and was lifting my bicycle onto the bike rack when a motorcycle coasted to a stop in the parking space behind me. Its powerful headlight lit up the whole area with bright intensity. As the rider dismounted and removed his helmet, I said to him, "I could use that headlight on *my* bike." His reply gave me pause. He said, "They still don't see me."



On the way home, I thought to myself, How on earth could a driver *not* see that headlight? Then I recalled a verse from the Bible. "The light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light . . ." (John 3:19). At first glance, it's easy for me to assign such a behavior to really bad people; surely no one in their right mind would love darkness rather than light. And then I thought about all the ways we practice avoidance, rationalization, justification, small deceptions, and the like. We have developed rather sophisticated strategies for staying close to the shadows when it's more convenient not to know, not to look, not to ask, not to tell. We would never call such behavior loving darkness rather than light—that's too dim an assessment. Yet the truth is that honesty and transparency in day to day decisions and relationships can often be difficult.

And yet . . . something deep inside longs to behold this promised light of hope and love that comes at Christmas, and is even willing to risk illuminating the unsavory in us and our world for the possibility of living our lives in true joy and freedom within the grace-bearing brightness of God.

The opportunity for newly welcoming the light of Christ into our lives is drawing near at Christmas. We could even say it has already arrived in Advent. All that is needed to open ourselves to the gift is a clear eye and a willing heart. The poet Hopkins puts it invitingly: "These things, these things were here, and but the beholder wanting . . ." Then come, let us behold.

Grace and peace.

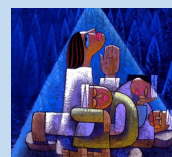
### *Watching for the Light*

Sunday morning Worship  
11 a.m. livestreamed on  
our website and facebook



### *Come and See What God Has Done*

Saturday at 6:00 p.m.  
Facebook and our website  
Sunday at 8:30 a.m.  
Zoom watch party



## Advent and Christmas at Laurel Heights



### Watching for the Light

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



Sunday morning Worship  
11 a.m. service of worship will be livestreamed  
on 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.

Saturday, December 12  
Placing a Poinsettia 12 to 3 p.m. by reservation

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. (outdoors)

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

*Come  
and  
See...*



## **Come and See What God Has Done**

### **An Advent Worship Experience**

Sunday, Nov 30, we launched a new way to worship at Laurel Heights. I am proud our church is trying to create new and meaningful worship experiences during COVID. We heard people say that worship “just wasn’t the same.” Some found watching the Sunday morning service meaningful, others thought the earlier pre-recorded services were better. Others, like me, chose to watch the recordings later, where I found myself fast forwarding through some parts – not exactly a worshipful attitude or experience.

So how do you create meaningful worship through an online experience? Our attempt to have a more profound online worship experience is the genesis for *Come and See*. We have tried to allow time to prepare for worship, (attitude adjustment time), and provide opportunities for active participation. Each week there will be a short reflection (a mini-sermon), and a hymn to sing along with (or just enjoy). There will be inspiring visuals, participation from the church family members (it will be great to see familiar faces that we’ve missed!) and music from Geoffrey and musical guests. And it will all happen in 28 minutes or less.

*Come and See* will be available Saturday evening at 6:00 on the website and facebook, to offer an opportunity other than Sunday to gather with family.

A shout out to the amazing team working on this! They have done all the hard work of putting it together. So *COME AND SEE....* We hope you find it meaningful.



## Request for Photos

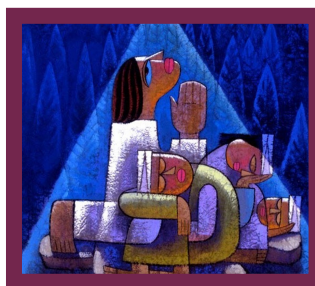
For a special segment in our new worship experience - Come and See What God Has Done -, we are requesting photos of church members holding something that gives light or standing beside something that gives off light. For example, take a photo holding a flashlight/candle or standing in front of Christmas lights. Feel free to be creative.

Photos should be in landscape mode and can be emailed to

Katie Myers at [katiewmyers@yahoo.com](mailto:katiewmyers@yahoo.com).

Please send photos by Saturday, December 5 at 5pm.

*Come and See...*



*Help adorn the chancel area  
by purchasing a poinsettia  
in honor or memory  
of a loved one this year.*

### 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](http://www.laurelheights.org)

**Deadline: Tuesday, December 8, 2020**



## Notes from the Faith Journey



My story of faith began as a journey of doubt and rebellion. It began as a 13 year old on a normal school day, starting as usual with catechism class. The nun, formidable appearing in her black habit, stood in front of the class of about 25 students. She began the lesson teaching not just about death but specifically our death. What followed was a lengthy, vivid and precise description of a horrifying experience. She described the sights, sounds, and even odors of an eternal torture. This was the punishment we could receive, as well as deserve for our sins.

As she continued, there was deafening silence and heavy fear in the room. At a certain point I became aware of leaning over my desk, head down with arms folded and firmly pressed into my chest. I remember raising my head as a clear thought slowly arose with the question "How do they know that?"

Adult years followed with more questions, doubts and rebellion as I searched for something I could believe rather than fear. It occurred while reading the Bible with the verse "The Spirit of God is within you." It is hard to describe the depth of realization, understanding and healing I received in that moment.

Life gradually changed for me with this blessing of love. Lessons continue as I am in my so called Senior Years; quite a long journey from that day as a 13 year old. My guiding principles include the commandment to love one another, maintaining a spirit of gratitude in all things and continuing to learn how to live the Golden Rule.

The Spirit of God is within us.

Gerri Hurst



## *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 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.

Pre-Charge Conference "Administrative Council Plus" meeting

Saturday, December 5, 2020 10:00 AM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/99224870040?pwd=QXh3NmN2eXpCNVh4cE90ekt2Wk95dz09>

Meeting ID: 992 2487 0040

Passcode: 014386

One tap mobile

+13462487799,,99224870040# US (Houston)

## *Wednesday Prayer Service*

**December 2 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...*

# 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 7<sup>th</sup>**.

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.



**Please contact Laura Healy  
with questions  
@ 210-364-7206**



## ALTAR GUILD WORK DAY

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



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

Budget Receipts:	November	Y-T-D
Contributions Received	\$53,767.34	\$667,438.46
Other Receipts	\$5,762.81	\$81,354.70
<b>Total Budget Receipts:</b>	<b>\$59,530.15</b>	<b>\$748,793.16</b>
Budget Expenses:	\$59,915.52	\$761,623.11
Ahead/ Behind:	-\$385.37	-\$12,829.95
PPP Loan Proceeds	\$0.00	\$101,074.93
Trustee Loan -2018		\$75,000.00
Paid 1/1/19		\$20,000.00
Balance Due:		\$55,000.00

*Thank you, Laurel Heights, for your faithfulness in giving.*

# 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.

### 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.

## FIND YOUR MISSION



### 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 **Thursday, December 3 from 1 -3 PM in the Woodlawn parking lot.**

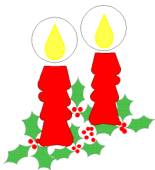


**TUESDAYS**  
**7:00PM - 8:30PM**

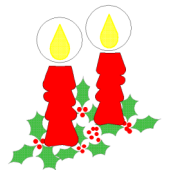
via Zoom  
Jan 12 - Apr 13

Leader: Katie Myers

Class Size is Limited.  
Registration & Additional Details:  
[katiemyers@yahoo.com](mailto:katiemyers@yahoo.com)  
(210)587-5498



# 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 to You !

December 10—December 16

**12/10**

Byrd Bonner  
Steve Haney  
Diana Phillips  
David Shelden

**12/12**

Jed Dorsey

**12/14**

Ginnie Herrera  
Hallie Saylor

**12/15**

Kenneth Henry

**12/16**

Marilyn McNeel



### JOYS AND CONCERNS

**Healing:** Billie Arredondo, Whit Birdsong (*Kitty Grantham*), Chris Carr's family (*Jim Carr*), Jeanne Coder, Concha Garces (*Teresa Garces*), Juan Garces (*Teresa Garces*), Gena, (*Thad Dorsey*), Marvin Gregory (*Carrie Clemens*), Annalynn Jackson, Lucien Manchester, Mary McGuire (*Mary Verette*), May O'Neal, Margaret Persky, Richard Rocha, Doug Semmes, Bill Shepard (*Janice Clayton*), Bob Walden.

#### *Those who mourn:*

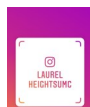
Richard Parrigan on the death of his wife, Marjorie.  
Family of Norma Spilsbury who died this week.

**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](mailto:prayers@mylhumc.org), through [Facebook Messenger](#), or calling the church office (210) 733-7156.