

# THE MESSENGER

The newsletter of Leesburg United Methodist Church

## Summer 2020

Volume 33—Issue 3 (published 7/30/20)



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### Message from Pastor Jim: We Never Closed!



**Rev. Jim  
Wishmyer,  
Pastor**

Back in March, we closed the physical doors of our historic sanctuary for Sunday worship. At the same time, we opened new virtual doors to our sanctuary and church through our livestreaming of Sunday worship. Committee and team members continued to engage and interact through online conferencing – Zoom, MS Teams, Uber-Conferencing, etc. Members and staff made greater use of our telephones to connect with one another during “Shelter at Home” and “Safer at Home”. Many wonderful activities and plans were

cancelled. Holy Week and Easter were different.

So much has changed in terms of what we used to do and how we used to do it. Everyone has had to learn new behaviors. Everyone has had to develop new ways of thinking and relating. Many have had to postpone celebrations or drastically alter their plans – graduations, weddings, funerals, birthdays, anniversaries, and more.

As we continue to learn and to adjust,

*(Continued on page 3)*

## Message from the Editor

### So much has changed since our last newsletter!

The Messenger for March (published February 28th) was the last issue published before coronavirus and Covid-19 prompted a sudden and widespread cancellation of life as we knew it. The newsletter was one of the many things that were abandoned in the months after Covid-19, but we're finally getting a new issue out to you—baby steps!

I always begin putting each newsletter together by making a copy of the last issue and updating from there—adding, removing, and updating as needed. As I scrolled through that March issue, I was reminded of just how thoroughly our plans have been disrupted. We had so many things in the works that have been cancelled, gone virtual, or otherwise been massively revised or reconsidered. So many things!

*Sunday Worship—virtual; Dinner Church during Lent—cancelled; Easter and Holy Week Worship—virtual; Adult small groups—some virtual, some suspended; New STEAM Sunday school program—suspended; Forever Young programs—cancelled; VBS Knights of North Castle—cancelled; Signature Mission activities at Loudoun Homeless Services Center—suspended; Great Beginnings Preschool—virtual; REACH Mission trip—cancelled and recrafted as local mission opportunities; General Conference—postponed to 2021;*

...and so many other things that weren't the subject of a March newsletter article. There is so much to grieve for, but now, four months later, it's time to look past the grief—work and pray past the grief if it's still got a grip on you. There was so much to be afraid of—is still so much to be concerned about, truth be told.

### And yet, so much remains unchanged.

God's people are people with an eternal hope, who are called to look past fear and to live as prudent and thankful stewards of the life they've been given. We are personally called to do the work God has given us to do, and corporately called to fulfill the mission and vision of Leesburg UMC.

## Our Mission and Vision

The mission of LUMC: to make disciples of Jesus Christ  
for the transformation of the world

We envision LUMC as a community of disciples who are becoming:  
Followers of Jesus – One with God & with each other – Ministers to all the world.

The ministries of LUMC have been mightily pruned by the effects of Covid-19, but hard pruning can initiate vigorous and concentrated new growth. The pages of this Summer 2020 issue of The Messenger show the beginnings of some of that new growth.

I'm so excited to see what we'll look like a year from now!

Peace Be with You All,

[Linda Stoutenburgh](#)

Editor (and Office Manager)



Linda Stoutenburgh,  
Office Manager



## Message from Pastor Jim: We Never Closed!

*(Continued from page 1)*

your church staff and leaders are continuing to move forward in developing new ways to be in ministry together. Part of our learning involves discovering how to live and be the church that now must respond to outside forces: COVID-19 and the search for a vaccine; the requirements imposed by our state and whichever recovery phase we are in; the guidelines of whichever stage our Virginia Conference has designated for all our United Methodist churches (currently still in Stage 2). Let me be quick to add that our Bishop and VA Conference leaders take seriously the safety of all our churches and the people we reach.

So here's where we are – and here's where we are headed. Our VA Conference "Stage 2" guidelines are more conservative than our state's "Phase 3" guidelines. We are limited to no more than 50% capacity with 6 ft social distancing for indoor worship; and no more than 50 persons for any other church activity. Everyone must wear a mask on church property – outside included – and maintain strict social distancing. In worship services, we may have music but no congregational singing – outdoors or indoors. We may have a soloist in outdoor worship who is masked and at least 25 ft from the nearest person. We must register in advance of the worship time and be able to answer "Yes" to the 4 questions on the Health Acknowledgment Form (Note: this no longer needs to be completed in advance but can be acknowledged when arriving for worship.).

With all of this in mind, and not knowing when United Methodists will be in Stage 3 (easing of many of these restrictions), our Healthy Church Team has helped us take a phased approach to expanding worship opportunities. We began with outdoor youth service activities in June and July. We then added outdoor Communion with our Neighborhood Groups in July. Beginning August 2, we will have outdoor worship, with Communion, in our parking lot (see more info on this ....). We are currently developing our plan for a return to indoor, in-person worship, with the Stage 2 requirements. No date has been set as we want to first experience and evaluate our outdoor, in-person worship.



In the meantime, we will continue to provide our Sunday morning worship through livestreaming, and plan to continue this even when we return to indoor worship. We'll continue to strengthen our connections through our Neighborhood Groups and the three priorities of Gather, Grow, Connect. We are re-visioning our other ministry plans for the fall for children, youth, and adults that will focus on virtual gatherings and in-person activities that meet our Stage 2 requirements. We'll keep caring for one another and seeking to reach new people with the saving grace of God.

Our world is changing. Our lives have changed. Our church is changing. In all of this we continue to learn, to explore new ways of being the church, to support mission efforts in our community and beyond, and find ways to stay connected.

The promise of God in this historic season of our lives continues to be reflected in the words recorded by Isaiah the prophet: "Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand" (Isaiah 41:10).

Grace and peace,

Rev. Jim Wishmyer

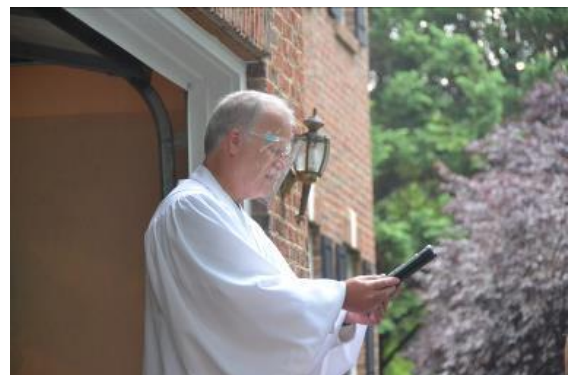
## Neighborhood Group Communion in July

Over the month of July we were so thankful to be able to bring the sacrament of Holy Communion to around 70 congregation members in their neighborhoods. We got to take communion to community parks, backyards, front yards, and places in between. It was a time of great connection with God and each other despite our social distance.



Thank you so much to all of our Neighborhood Group Point People who coordinated the locations and sent out invitations to folks in their neighborhoods. We are really looking forward to getting to do more with our neighborhood groups in the future, so be sure to be looking out for a contact from your Neighborhood Group Point People.

Thank you to everyone who came out and made this a great success!



## Sunday Morning Livestream

We continue the “LUMC Worship Connection,” our 10 am livestream of Sunday morning worship, and we invite you to join us . The music, prayer, scripture and message are designed to encourage, inspire, inform, and empower us to live as faith-sharers, hope-lifters, and love-givers during these unusual times! What a challenge – yet God is with us (Isaiah 41:10).

In August, we’ll wrap up our journey through Paul’s message to the Ephesian churches on how God is reconciling all things (Ephesians chapter 6, Aug 2 and Aug 9). Then we’ll search the scriptures to see the many ways in which “God Makes A Way” when we cannot. We’ll also hear from one another the stories of God turning our setbacks into comebacks, our detours into new directions, and our obstacles into opportunities

Before Jesus’ followers were called Christians, they were known as the people of “The Way”. Beginning August 16, Pastor Jim will be sending out a daily inspiration, “The Way for Today”, as a prayer reminder and encouragement to trust God.



[leesburgumc.org/livestream](https://leesburgumc.org/livestream)

## Sunday Evening Worship

Join us for outdoor worship and the sacrament of Holy Communion, Sunday evenings at 7 pm, in our back parking lot behind Aldersgate (off Liberty Street). This informal time of worship will last about 30 minutes and we invite you to bring your own folding chair or lawn chair. There will be parking for seniors on Liberty Street. Other parking is available in the Blossom and Bloom lot and in the parking lot of Leesburg Presbyterian Church. Remember that it's summer and outdoors - this is a casual event where shorts and sandals are perfectly appropriate!



Basic Requirements:

- Register in advance - which includes health acknowledgement
- Pre-attendance temperature check at home (stay home if temperature is 100.4 or more)
- Maintain Social distance of at least 6 ft from others people/households
- Face coverings are required
- No hugs, handshakes, etc.
- Bring your own communion elements (bread and grape juice) or use our prepackaged
- Bring your own chair or plan to stand (service will be approx. 30 minutes)

**Attendance is limited to 50 people, so sign up now!**

[Register Here](#)



**Angela Becek,**  
*Director of  
Discipleship  
Ministries*

## Distance Learning...

You get to do distance learning again this fall, whether you signed up for it or not. As one who has worked with kids and teens for many years, mostly in other settings, but with some classroom experience, here are a few tidbits to keep in mind:

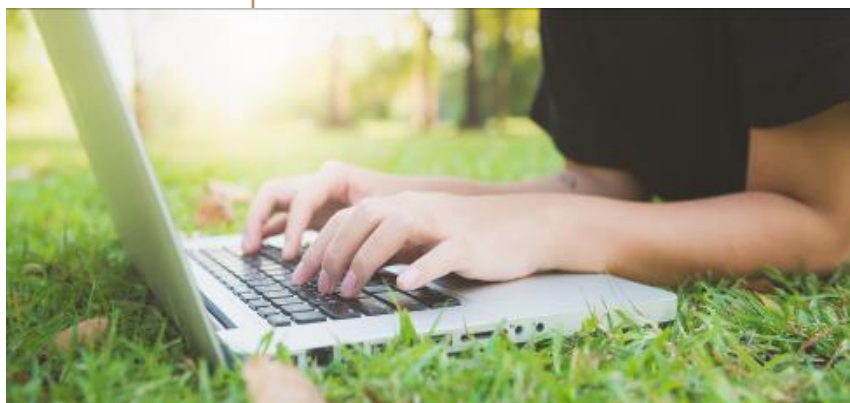
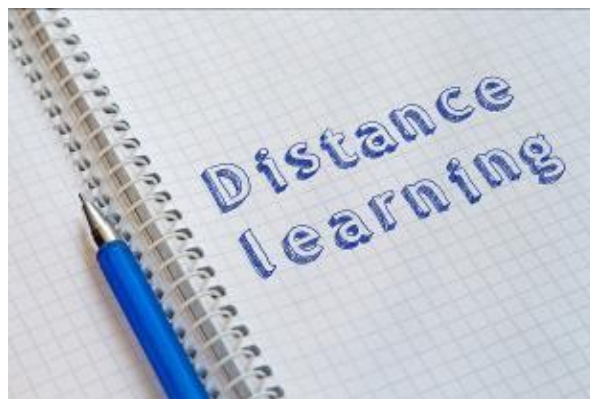
- Be flexible. Each teacher and each kid has a different style and almost none of them is working in their optimal environment. Some might actually be more productive working on their bed or with music playing or sitting outside—and that's okay. They also might need a change of scenery; the living room for math, the basement for English, etc. They are used to different classrooms for different subjects.
- They need peers. They need socialization, work groups, ways to let off steam. School is supposed to be social, let them work on their assignments while they chat with their friends, that's what makes school take all day, instead of only a few hours.
- They're probably normal. They might experience loneliness, depression, anxiety—just listen and don't try to fix everything. Listen more than you advise. Watch for warning signs and make sure they (and you) are spending time with peers.
- They need breaks. They need to get up and walk to their next class, they need exercise and they need to shift gears from one thing to the next. Those breaks normally involve other people.
- They need structure. Keep in mind that for most kids and teens that doesn't mean a minute-by-minute itinerary, it means a basic routine that works for them.
- Offer grace. Your child is not falling behind. It's not a race. Everyone has been dealt the same hand. A few will find that they truly excel with this freedom to work more on their own terms, but most will struggle. If this was optimal, it would have been normal. It's not. You will get tired and frustrated, so will your kids and so will their teachers. Some days are going to be hard. Let it go. Declare a snow/sick/personal day, just not too often.
- Don't compare yourself or your kids or their teachers to others.

I was reminded recently that when Cortes and his men arrived in North America, he

burned their boats so that his men would let go of any fantasies of returning to Europe and they would move forward with their mission. It's not a perfect analogy, but we have to remember to keep moving forward. We are all explorers and pioneers now. The road before us has not been mapped; no one has gone before us.

Embrace the adventure!

~ Angela Becek



## Summer Project Youth (SPY) 2020

LUMC youth have participated in a summer mission trip for over a decade. When that was canceled, along with most of their regular summer activities, our youth began coming together for fellowship centered around serving.

They've had two trips to JK Community Farms to plant and harvest vegetables that will go to Loudoun Hunger Relief and have more trips planned.

They also worked with our Trustees on projects that have been needed around LUMC (below) and have a trip planned to help with repairs at Camp High Road, a UMC camp in Middleburg.

We follow all health and safety guidelines including: masks, distancing, and no carpooling.

In the fall, we plan to continue these efforts, likely on Monday afternoons, as an incentive to get through the asynchronous school assignments!

If you have any projects or would like to participate, please [contact Angela Becek](#).



Removing the sound system that has supported youth worship in the AG for many years, so we can use it for outdoor worship.



Making repairs to the fire escape.



Removing the dead bushes that were in front of the playground.



**Rev Heather Wray, Director of Connect Ministries**

## Spiritual Rhythms

### I have a confession to make...

...reading daily devotionals never helped me feel connected to God! In fact, I really dislike them in general and have half-used devotionals all around my home. From popular ones like “Jesus Calling” to nerdy ones like “Every Day with the Desert Fathers,” I never could find one that helped me connect with God.

I used to feel like a failure when it came to the “quiet time” that everyone talked about. I was embarrassed because I did not have the discipline to force myself to read the daily devotionals that everyone said would make my relationship with God better. I wanted to know how to connect with God, but “pretty” women’s devotional books never did it for me, and I felt lost.

Then I learned more about “spiritual disciplines,” or as I like to call them, “spiritual rhythms.” Join me this fall for a self-led program where you can learn how to create spiritual rhythms for your life.

If you love daily devotionals, fantastic! This self-led program can help you expand those daily spiritual rhythms. If daily devotionals have never been your thing, then join me and let’s find some spiritual rhythms that will resonate with you. Quiet time with God is not a one size fits all proposition! So let’s stop acting like it is and let’s find what helps you connect with God in a more meaningful and transformational way.

Join me for my Spiritual Rhythms class starting the first week of October. Details of how to join will be provided as the date gets closer.

*-Rev. Heather Wray*



### Our Current Breakthrough Prayer:

**O God, Awesome and Holy, we praise and adore you!**

**Thank you, Jesus! for walking with us and calling us to be your church.**

**Thank you, Holy Spirit! for empowering us to serve, witness, and work according to your will.**

**Thank you, Father! for helping us to do more than we dreamed.**

**Forgive us our doubt and stubbornness. Kindle our hearts with hope for the future, love for neighbor, and faith to persevere in doing your will.**

**Keep breaking through our lives, our church, and our community to bring new partnerships, new life, and new power to do far more than we can even imagine.**

**May it be, O God! In Jesus’ name. Amen.**



## Sunday School and VBS 2020 Style!

Our kids have been meeting virtually since March and we've even increased our average attendance from what we were experiencing prior to the need to the pivot to a virtual format.

Margrit Snyder and Heather Gonzalez have been meeting with kids on Sundays and Wednesdays over Zoom and leading them through VBS material as they learn what it means to trust Jesus.

We delivered activity packs, so the kids can still have hands-on experiences while they talk with their leaders and watch Bible stories featuring familiar faces like: Chris Becek, Keffen Frazee, Dan Whitt, Tim Gochenour, Nate Rathjen and Rev. Wishmyer.

For the fall, we're planning to add on-site experiences for all to participate in, along the lines of a museum with interactive items for kids, activities for youth, and meaningful information for adults. All would be by appointment and one household at a time with all health and safety protocols.

If you'd like to help by submitting videos or donating items, please [contact Angela Becek](#).



### **Needed items:**

Assorted beads  
Assorted yarn, string,  
plastic lacing/string,  
ribbon  
Stickers  
Neutral/natural sheets  
and woven blankets  
Adhesive gems  
Jingle bells

***Needed by August 23***



We are looking for items to help create a scene like this one.

If you have anything that you can donate, please [contact Angela Becek](#).

We'll come and pick it up!

## Spirit of the Living God

by Katrina Broglio—Director of Traditional Music

Sometimes, often times, parts of songs will get stuck in my head and play nonstop on repeat. Sometimes its annoying and other times I find that its God’s way of getting me to prayerfully pay attention to the words. This has been the case with the song “Spirit of the Living God” that we sang on Pentecost. The lyrics are:

“Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.  
Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.  
Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.  
Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.”

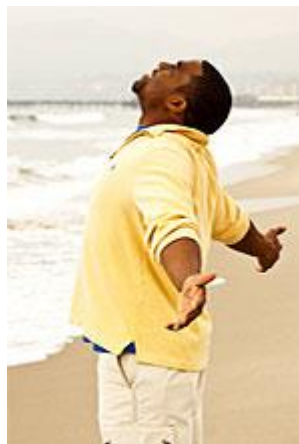
This song is a pleading request for God’s Holy Spirit to fall on us and reside in us. How often do we ask for this? Do we really know what we are asking for? Being one of God’s children, filled with His Spirit, isn’t always a comfortable process. Below is a prayerful mediation on different phrases in the song. Take it as you will

“Melt me” - Like molten metal or molten rock. Take me in my current, sinful, state and melt everything away that does not serve you. It is hard to change. Its uncomfortable but it is right and good in you, Lord.

“Mold me” – Take me and shape me in your image. Bend me and twist me in whichever way you need me to be. Challenge me in all ways so that I don’t live in comfort but in all ways reflect you.

“Fill me” – Lord, fill me with your Spirit. May my heart be filled with your Spirit, your love, and your praises. May I not be filled with my own, selfish, wishes and desires but rather they be a reflection of your Spirit filled in me.

“Use me” – Use me for your good will and your good purpose. Use me to share Jesus’ love and ministry with everyone I meet. I haven’t melted, molded, and filled just to do what I wish with your gifts, but to do your will and to go where you call me. Amen.

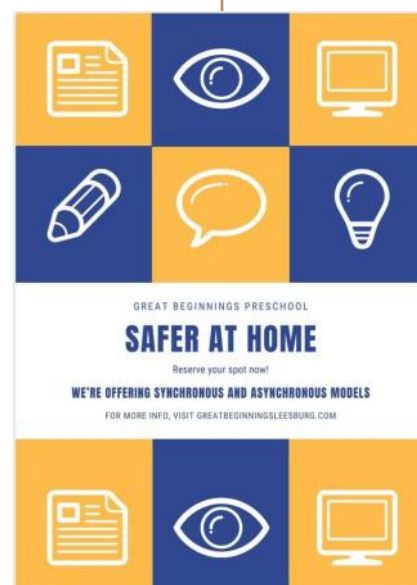


## Great Beginnings Preschool

Exciting things are happening at GBP this Fall!

Check out [our Facebook page](#) or email [greatbeginningsleesburg@gmail.com](mailto:greatbeginningsleesburg@gmail.com) for more information on our [Safer at Home](#) Virtual learning models.

Blessings,  
Heather Gonzalez  
Director, Great Beginnings Preschool  
[greatbeginningsleesburg@gmail.com](mailto:greatbeginningsleesburg@gmail.com)  
[www.greatbeginningsleesburg.com](http://www.greatbeginningsleesburg.com)



## Half-Year Giving Statements

**THANK YOU to our faithful givers! Thank you for continuing to support the missions and ministries of Leesburg UMC even as we have been prevented from gathering together as we used to.**

First half of 2020 giving statements were emailed on July 21 (for the small number of people without email on file, we mailed paper statements at the same time.)

If you haven't received your emailed statement, please check your junk mail folder or spam filter for a message from [noreply@leesburgumc.e360chms.com](mailto:noreply@leesburgumc.e360chms.com). Your giving statement will be a PDF attachment to the email.

If you still don't find your statement, or if you have any questions about your giving, just [email linda@leesburgumc.org](mailto:email.linda@leesburgumc.org).

### Postage Reminder

If you are a person who mails us your offering (or if you would like to do so), we can send you pre-stamped, pre-addressed envelopes if it is difficult for you to get stamps and/or envelopes. Just email, or leave a message on the church office voice mail.



## Leesburg United Methodist Church

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Leesburg, VA 20176

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www.leesburgumc.org



Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.  
**The people of The United Methodist Church®**

## Do You Have Our App? Have You Tried Text Giving?

### We Now Have an App!

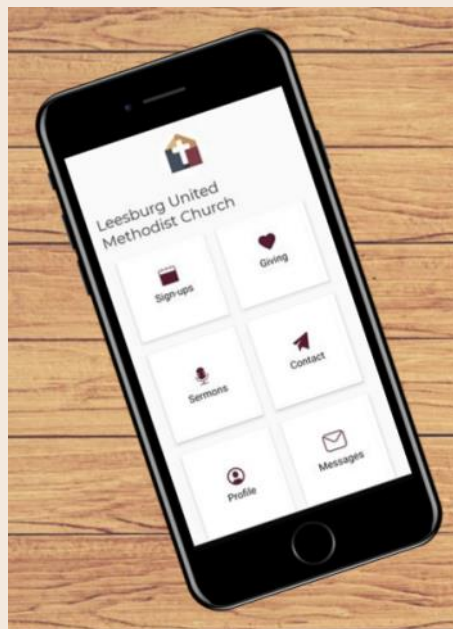
Our new app (available for Android and Apple devices) will help you find event sign-ups, listen to recent sermons, make it easy to give using credit card or direct debit from your bank account, and contact us for general questions or prayer requests.

Use the QR codes to get the Apps. Once it's installed on your device, search for "Leesburg UMC".

### Text to Give

Don't want to bother with the app for your online giving? Just use "Text-to-Give"! Simply text GIVE to 703-440-7222. The first time you give this way, the system will return a link to set up you payment info.

After the one time set-up, you're just a simple text away from quickly honoring God through your giving and gratitude.



Apple:



Android:

