

THE MESSENGER

The newsletter of Leesburg United Methodist Church

October 2020

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Inside This Issue:

Message from Pastor Jim: In the Wilderness----- 1

Connect

Worship Update ----- 2

Defying Gravity ----- 3

Pray for Our Leaders ----- 11

Grow

Spiritual Rhythms ----- 4

Financial Peace University ----- 4

Bible Adventure:
Expedition Promised Land ----- 6

Youth and Kids ----- 7

Disciple----- 11

Reach

GBP Recess Run----- 9

Mission Central ----- 10

Steward

CLT Corner: Leadership Highlights ----- 5

LUMC's App and Online Giving----- 12

Message from Pastor Jim: In the Wilderness



**Rev. Jim
Wishmyer,
Pastor**

The Wilderness Escape adventure during September highlighted the journey of God's people in the wilderness after their escape from Egypt. Here they were, thousands of people, suddenly uprooted from all that was familiar, following a leader they barely knew, and depending on a God they weren't certain they could trust. Talk about uncertainty, anxiety, and fear! What a recipe for things going wrong. At the beginning of their epic journey, they experienced scarcity in the form of food insecurity. And, of course, they complained. They wanted to go back to Egypt, back to the way things were, back to the familiar. It took only a few days to get the people of Israel out of Egypt. It took 40 years to get Egypt out of them – their minds, their hearts, their yearning, their limited ways of thinking and perceiving.

One of the reasons that many appreciated the Wilderness Escape is because we feel the wilderness all around. It's incredible to think what we've been through the past seven

(Continued on page 8)

Worship Update

First, many thanks to our faithful members who have been helping make worship possible for all of us at LUMC! Our livestream team continues to grow and has done a great job preparing, presenting, and monitoring our livestream worship. The Becek family has been faithful to set up each week that we have been holding our outdoor Communion service in our parking lot. And, now that we have indoor worship, our team of ushers, greeters, and A/V crew are helping us to practice social distancing and safe protocols while we gather for worship. We are also blessed to have one of our members who is offering his time and expertise to disinfect our sanctuary and building between our livestream and indoor worship each Sunday.

In case you missed any of this, here's our Sunday schedule:

- 9 am Children's Sunday school via Zoom
- 10 am Worship Connection via livestream
- 11:30 am Indoor, in-person worship in our sanctuary
- 5 pm Outdoor, in-person Holy Communion in our back parking lot

We continue to monitor our worship and are making plans for how we might expand our opportunities as we approach Advent and Christmas. We welcome your feedback on what you are finding helpful and any suggestions you have. As always, we can use additional help to lighten the load of those helping out. Here are some ways:

- Monitor sound for livestream worship (training and mentoring provided)
- Prepare livestream worship using Livestream Studio (training and mentoring provide)
- Usher or Greeter for 11:30 am (training and weekly checklist – this is different from pre-COVID)

Thank you, for your faithfulness, your prayers, and your sharing in what God is doing in and through Leesburg UMC!

**Sunday
Livestream:**
[Click Here
for Webpage](#)

**The
Worship
Connection**



**Sanctuary
Worship:**
[Click Here
to Register](#)

**Outdoor
Communion:**
[Click Here
to Register](#)



Defying Gravity: Break Free from the Culture of More

Would you rather be known as generous? Or as stingy, or miserly? Our gracious God is also a generous God who calls us to lives of generosity. During October, we'll be studying the topic of biblical generosity. For four weeks, we'll explore why generosity brings people joy and what forces work against it. Many want to experience the significance of blessing others, but may feel trapped by past decisions; or, may have been misled by a society that bombards us with a message focused on having more and having better as the path to satisfaction and significance.

Good news! Jesus shows how to "defy gravity" and break free from the culture of more. Listen in and pay attention to what the Bible says about how to experience a generous life. There will be exercises and challenges during this series to help you consider your own personal and family situation, as we reflect on our attitudes about money, possessions, and giving. For instance, each week, we'll give you a Clean-Out Challenge as we take steps to break free from the culture of more.

So take the bold first step toward learning to defy gravity and discovering how to can live generously by joining us for worship! I believe you won't want to miss a single Sunday of Defying Gravity.

Rev. Jim Wishmyer

(Stay tuned each week for the "Clean-Out Challenge" – Week 1: "Shred it!" Bring all your old documents/paper that you no longer need to Tuscarora High School for secure shredding on-site, Saturday, October 10, 9 am to 1 pm. Limit: 3 storage file boxes, or 3 32-gal trash bags per vehicle. Additional Info: <https://www.leesburgva.gov/departments/public-works/trash-recycling-services/community-document-shredding-events/>.)

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|------------|---|
| October 4 | World Communion; "Defying Gravity – The Pull of Possessions"
Matthew 19:16-26 - Rev. Jim Wishmyer |
| October 11 | "Breaking Free" Luke 15:11-32
Walter Tennyson, Co-Lay Leader; Jill Ryan, Testimony |
| October 18 | "Tethered to God" Matthew 6:21
David Kirsten; Kristie Grinnell, Testimony |
| October 25 | Consecration Sunday; "Getting our Giving Right"
Luke 8:27-38; 2 Corinthians 9:6-15
The Rev. Dr. Sathianathan Clarke, Professor of Theology, Culture,
and Mission (Bishop Sundo Kim Chair for World Christianity),
Wesley Theological Seminary |



Find Your Spiritual Rhythms

If you've ever struggled to cultivate time set apart for God, or your spiritual practices aren't cutting it for you, join Rev. Heather for this 6 week program on Spiritual Rhythms.

This is a 6 week long program (October 2—November 6) with a weekly check in component where we will explore and grow in six different areas of faith formation.

Every Friday, via email, you will receive a video created by Rev. Heather introducing you to one of the areas of faith formation. Within the email, there will be weekly challenges that you can select from to practice as you grow in the weekly faith formation area.

On Thursdays, we will gather via Zoom to discuss how the practice went that week for you and others who are participating in the group. This program is beginner-friendly and it will be up to you how much time you want to devote to it; though any amount will prove fruitful.

If interested please [email Rev. Heather Wray](#), sign up online under events on the website, or [use this link](#).



Financial Peace University

We're looking to offer the nine-week Financial Peace University (FPU) course, in conjunction with our Fall Stewardship Campaign. FPU has helped a number of church members and others in our community to learn proven principles for having financial peace.

To begin October 19, 7 pm. Facilitators: Joe DeFranco and Rev. Jim Wishmyer (both FPU graduates). Scholarships are available. [Sign up online](#). Feel free to contact Joe or Pastor Jim via the church office.

From the Dave Ramsey/Financial Peace University website:

The Knowledge You Need to Win With Money

Financial Peace University includes nine video lessons featuring Dave Ramsey, Rachel Cruze, and Chris Hogan. Follow along in your workbook as they teach you:

Lesson 1: Build a Starter Emergency Fund and Learn How to Budget

Lesson 2: Pay Off All Debt

Lesson 3: Save a Fully Funded Emergency Fund

Lesson 4: Invest for the Future and Build Wealth

Lesson 5: Buyer Beware

Lesson 6: The Role of Insurance

Lesson 7: Retirement Planning

Lesson 8: Real Estate and Mortgages

Lesson 9: Outrageous Generosity



CLT Corner: Highlights from your Church Leadership Team

This Month: Finance and Ministry Leadership Team

Finance

LUMC's Finance Committee (FC) continues to meet virtually each month. We have been focusing our attention on three main areas:

1. **Budget.** We have supported the Visioning sub-committee, led by FC member Dennis Wise and also supported by Joe DeFranco. Subsequently, the FC supported the CLT to help reach this year's budget goal.
2. **Debt.** We continue to focus on retiring all church mortgage debt as quickly as possible. Thanks to generous donations from you and loan refinance on favorable terms, we expect our mortgage to be paid off in less than 2 years.
3. **Paycheck Protection Plan (PPP)** loan under the CARES Act. Since receiving this loan, we have been adhering to a disciplined process to keep these funds separate from all other church money and have created clear records demonstrating the use of these funds. We intend to apply for loan forgiveness and anticipate approval.

Lastly, we are working on how we can present financial information regularly to the congregation that is simple and informative. We see this as an area of required improvement for us.

~ Tom Payne, Finance Chair

Ministry Leadership Team

When you hear MLT do you wonder what that is? We're your Ministry Leadership Team at LUMC. We are a group of staff and volunteers who are ministry team leaders and we take the priorities and direction from our Church Leadership Team (CLT), and make plans and implement ministry tasks to meet those priorities. Our members represent our Reach, Connect, and Grow ministry groups such as worship, mission, discipleship, fellowship, and hospitality.

In September, we met and discussed 1) ways to grow our church through our online presence; 2) what is happening in the area of our local missions; 3) how to improve internal communication (resulting in this new feature for the newsletter); and, 4) some exciting plans for worship during Advent and Christmas. Please feel free to contact me or any of our ministry leaders and clergy to find out more, and to lend your hands and feet to our ministry and mission of "making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world"!

~ Polly Downey, MLT Chair

Charge Conference

Our annual Charge Conference will be held virtually, via Zoom, on Sunday, October 18, 2020, at 2:30 pm. This year, our meeting will be very different in that this meeting of our church leadership with our District Superintendent will be virtual, and it will be between 20 and 30 minutes as we submit our Administrative reports.



Angela Becek,
Director of
Discipleship
Ministries

Bible Adventure: Expedition Promised Land

Join us in October for Expedition Promised Land, and spend about an hour exploring the bulk of Israel's history from Joshua through Kings.

Our actors, and our friends with the Bible Project, will tell the story via engaging videos as you move through the areas we've staged to help tell the tale.

Each station has its own special set design and many have (optional) interactive activities to help reinforce the lessons for visitors of all ages.

**Please reserve your time slot in advance
[by clicking here.](#)**



In September, we had over 80 people experience the stories of the Exodus through Wilderness Escape Bible Adventure.



What about Health and Safety?

- Each family (household/bubble) will schedule a timed entry.
- One group at a time, with a minimum of one hour between groups to clear the air.
- All frequently touched surfaces will be cleaned between groups.
- Hand sanitizing stations will be placed within, and sinks will be available for hand washing.
- Head of Household will affirm adherence with the Health Acknowledgment poster on behalf of all household members upon entry.

The AG has been transformed into our Bible Adventures space, where each month we'll welcome our members into a new way of growing our faith by being immersed in the Biblical narrative.

Youth and Kids

We will be returning to **JK Community Farm** on **Saturday, October 10** (9 to 10:30 am or 10:30 to Noon) and all are welcome to join us! Please pre-register.



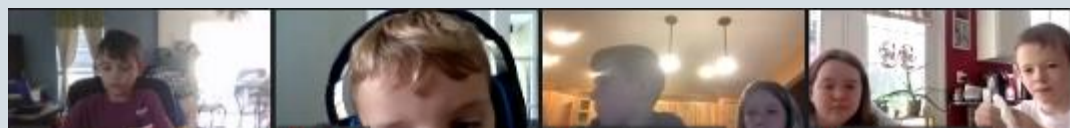
Our Youth gathered for a scavenger hunt around Downtown Leesburg at the end of August so they could spend some much needed in-person time together.



Our Youth and Club 45 Kids will be returning to Camp High Road in October and November for Fellowship & Serve.

Tentative Dates: October 12 & 26

November 7 & 21



Our kids have continued to meet for Sunday School over Zoom as they've gone deeper into the stories presented through the Bible Adventures with songs, crafts and science. Craft bags are delivered to family's homes each month, so that kids can participate.

If you'd like to help deliver or assemble bags, please [contact Angela Becek.](#)



Rev. Wishmyer joined to offer a special blessing before school started this month, too!



Message from Pastor Jim:

(Continued from page 1)

months! In the midst of a health crisis, we turned to our leaders as we always do. Only this time, like Moses, they didn't have Waze or even a map. But they did (eventually) point us to "the next step." Arguably, the next step was, and is, not always the best step, but we often don't know until we take that step. We need to try. Along the way we have learned a lot that we did not know when we began. This novel coronavirus has given rise to some novel prescriptions and creative solutions. Manufacturers pivoted to begin making ventilators. Communities came together to help one another with grocery shopping, preparing meals for those living alone, unique celebrations for graduation, birthdays, weddings, and even births. We've discovered how to worship, conduct meetings, and connect with loved ones online. Now we're learning to do school. Our world has changed – and we are changing with it. One step at a time.

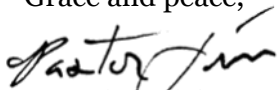
When the Israelites in Exodus 16 experienced food insecurity, God promised to provide and gave them their next step: collect your food each morning. There was just one catch: they were only to collect enough food ("manna" they called it, which literally means, "what is it?") sufficient for that day. Those who collected more quickly discovered that the manna spoiled overnight (Just imagine what your refrigerator smells like when you have spoiled food inside!). Why only enough for the day? Most likely God gave them this stipulation because God was teaching them trust. Trust that God will be with you each day. Trust that God will provide for your needs. Trust that God will guide you to your eventual destination, one step at a time.

When will this pandemic end? When will there be a vaccine? Who will be our next president? When will we be back in school? When will we all be back in church? How will I pay my bills now that my work hours have been cut or I've lost my job? How can I get it all done today; I'm overwhelmed before I even get out of bed?

There are no easy answers, but there are next steps. As followers of Jesus, take the next step each morning of "collecting manna" by reading scripture, even if it is just the verse of the day and reflecting on God's presence with you. Throughout your day, take a 1-minute pause to breathe deep: exhale by giving whatever weighs you down to God, and inhale by reminding yourself that God is with you, that God loves you, that God promises to guide you. And, find some way during your day to take the next step of reaching out to someone else. Find out how they are doing. Listen. Let them know your care. Pray for or with them.

There are so many unknowns in this COVID world. Two certainties remain: the promise of God's presence, and the promise of God's people together. "The Lord is my shepherd..." Your shepherd. Our shepherd. He will lead us through!

Grace and peace,



Rev. Jim Wishmyer

Great Beginnings Preschool: Recess Run

Map out your route, round up some Halloween garb and lace up those running shoes...its RECESS RUN TIME!

This Halloween themed event has been a staple in our GBP community for 5 years running... pun intended! In 2020, we are hosting this event VIRTUALLY and spreading it out over three FRIGHTENINGLY FUN days. We are excited to provide this opportunity for our students, staff, families and community to have some Halloween fun!

Here's how it works:

Register for the event: RUNNING/WALKING, BIKING, SWIMMING...or...TRIATHLON (more details below). You choose which of three days is best for your participation. When you've completed your event, log your time through PRR. It's that easy! Remember to submit your selfies (costumes are a bonus) to our race FB page during race weekend. The link to our Race FB group can be found on our website, www.greatbeginningsleesburg.com, look for the pumpkin race logo!

This virtual race is packed with ideas to keep you and your family active in a safe way while staying connected with your community (far and near).

Locals are welcome to pick up race packets at Great Beginnings Preschool, packet shipping is also an option for an additional fee.

As mentioned above, we have extended the playing field to swimming (or rowing machine), cycling (stationary bike/peloton/echelon) as well as walking or running (treadmill/elliptical). Need more of a challenge? Take on our TRIATHLON—bike, swim and run (you can spread these out over the three race days) your way to VICTORY!

Registration Information:

5K, Swim or Bike (any distance): \$25 through October 8th, \$30 through October 28th and \$40 until registration closes.

Triathlon (combination of all three): \$30 through October 8th, \$35 through October 28th and \$40 until registration closes.

Online Registration will close on Saturday, October 31 at midnight. [CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

Swag: Registrants will receive a commemorative cotton race shirt. UPGRADE to a Performance Shirt for an additional \$6! Shirts will be guaranteed if registered by October 9.

Packet Pick up: You can pick up your bib and shirt on October 26 and 29 at Great Beginnings Preschool (107 W Market Street, Leesburg, VA 20176) Times to be determined.

Awards: Medals will given to all participants. All registered racers will be entered into door prize drawings. Door prizes will be picked live on FaceBook on November 2.

Questions? Email Heather Gonzalez at greatbeginningsleesburg@gmail.com.

Thank you for supporting our Preschool Family!





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

Mission Central

Loving God and loving neighbor are central to our faith as Christians. Here at Leesburg United Methodist we take that call seriously. In the face of COVID 19, we never stopped serving God and caring for others. Check out what we've done in terms of mission and then see how you can get involved in upcoming opportunities to serve.

Where we've served:

The Ampersand Pantry Project: We've helped feed our hungry neighbors meals with the Ampersand Pantry Project. Your monetary donations to our Pandemic Relief Fund have allowed us to help this non-profit continue to serve the Leesburg community. Some of our members have even been the hands and feet of Jesus, volunteering their time and energy to serve meals multiple afternoons.

Loudoun Hunger Relief (LHR): Collections for LHR have continued throughout the pandemic. Our local Neighborhood Groups have collected for LHR as well as monthly donation drop off events held at church. As LHR serves more clients than ever before, LUMC continues to help meet the needs of this vital community non-profit.

Thank Yous from Ampersand Pantry and Loudoun Hunger Relief

Our heartfelt thanks to Leesburg United Methodist Church for your contributions to the Ampersand Pantry Project. You've helped keep us going through the summer, and now into the Fall! ~ Peter Burnett

(\$5,000 from our Pandemic Relief Fund through September!)

We'd like to take a moment to express our incredible thanks to Leesburg United Methodist Church! Your gifts are helping us to meet the ongoing – and increasing – need to provide food for families throughout the year; promote nutritious food choices; and provide fresh milk and eggs each month. Thank you for caring and helping us to help!

~ Jennifer Montgomery, Executive Director

(\$5,000 from our Pandemic Relief Fund through September!
Plus your donations of non-perishable foods.)

Where you can serve next:

JK Community Farms: October 10th will be the next opportunity for anyone to serve alongside our youth at JK Community Farms. You can sign up online or call the church office to register. [Pre-register here](#) (registration opens Sept 23).

Loudoun Hunger Relief Drop Off: The first Tuesday of every month we are collecting for LHR. Please bring non perishable food items to donate to LHR who is in need of healthy food for their influx of clients.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors: Keep you eyes peeled for opportunities to help your neighbors. Currently we have one sign-up for a congregation member who needs transporation to Fairfax. If you'd like to have the list please [email Rev. Heather Wray](#).

(Continued on page 11)

(Continued from page 10)

Backpack Buddies: We have resumed our Backpack Buddies program, supporting food-insecure children at Catoctin Elementary School. Food donations can be dropped off at the church and placed in the Missions Room (next to the office). We will need: milk (shelf stable), juice boxes, fruit cups, applesauce cups, Cheese crackers (not peanut butter), granola bars (without nuts), instant oatmeal, cereal (individual size), Chef Boyardee single serving cups or cans, Mac n' Cheese single serving cups, and Ramen Cup -O-Noodles. Monetary donations can be made thru your gifts to the church by indicating the donation is for Backpack Buddies. Monetary donations allow us to buy in bulk and get more food at a cheaper price.



BACKPACK BUDDIES

This year, food packing is in Wesley Hall by individuals/families via online registration, so only one person/family packs at a time. [Click here for the registration page](#) with currently available dates and times.

If you have any questions about our Backpack Buddies program, please contact Barbara Luna (blunalsbrg@aol.com), or Rev. Jim Wishmyer (jim.leesburgumc.org).

Salvation Army Angel Tree: We are looking for a person to lead LUMC's annual participation in the Angel Tree Program; read about [the program here](#). This person will coordinate with our local Salvation Army office, as well as recruiting/coordinating additional LUMC volunteers to get our Angel Tree setup with angel tags, supplies, and instructions; contact the church office for timely communication to the congregation, and generally keep up with the process as needed until gifts are picked up by Salvation Army. [Contact Pastor Jim](#) if you'd like to lead up this gift-giving effort!

COVID Worship Reminder and Prayer

With breaking news of our President and his wife testing positive to COVID-19, and the news earlier this week about our Governor and his wife testing positive, please join me in praying for their well-being and good health. Their addition to the statistics of this disease remind us to continue to practice the safety protocols in place wherever we go. Always wear a mask and practice social distancing. Grace, peace, and good health.

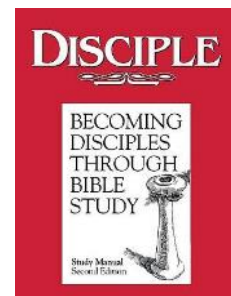
PRAY for our Leaders

Disciple Bible Study

Join me, Pastor Jim, for an in-depth journey through the New Testament, this Fall and Winter as we dive into the New Testament portion of Disciple Bible Study, perhaps the most significant in-depth bible study the United Methodist Church has ever produced.

Weekly background videos by various biblical scholars help the stories and people of the bible to come alive. Daily readings help us to engage with the scriptures and weekly discussions help us to better understand and apply the bible to our lives.

Meetings will be by Zoom on Wednesdays at 3 pm. We began the journey on Wednesday, September 23. [Contact me, Pastor Jim](#), for more details; and sign up online by [clicking on this link](#).



Leesburg United Methodist Church

107 West Market Street
Leesburg, VA 20176

703-777-2056
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!

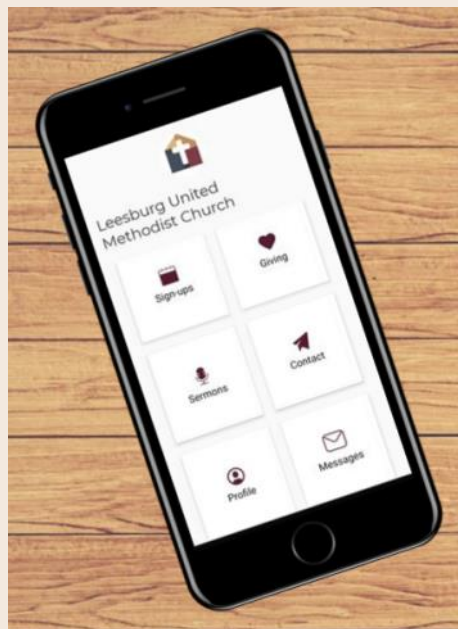
Our new app (available for Android and Apple devices) will help you find event sign-ups, listen to recent sermons, make it easy to give using credit card or direct debit from your bank account, and contact us for general questions or prayer requests.

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 your 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:

