

THE MESSENGER

The newsletter of Leesburg United Methodist Church

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Message from Pastor Jim: Your Life Matters



**Rev. Jim
Wishmyer,
Pastor**

Your vote matters. Absolutely. Getting your flu shot matters, for you, for your loved ones, for anyone with whom you come in contact. Wearing your mask and physical distancing in public matters. In this crazy year of COVID-19, one thing stands out as lesson number 1: individual choices and actions matter. The health of others depends on you and me. We see more clearly in so many ways that our actions, our words, and even our attitudes affect others.

“Turn away from evil and do good. Search for peace and work to maintain it.”

Psalm 34:14; 1 Peter 3:11

(Peace takes work.)

“Learn to do good. Seek justice. Help the oppressed. Defend the cause of orphans. Fight for the rights of widows.” Isaiah 1:17

(In order to “learn” someone must also be willing to “teach”, to model, to live and love with integrity.)

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November Worship Highlights

November Sermons

Much of our news these days is alarming. Division, disease, dissent, and disrespect seem to rule the day. In his timely book, *Love is the Way*, the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, Bishop Michael J. Curry, shares a vision of life for Christians and non-Christians that embraces the ethic of Jesus: “love your neighbor... love your

enemy”. In November, Rev. Wray and I will be sharing some of the insights of Curry’s book, along with our and others’ thoughts on 1 Corinthians 13 – Paul’s “more excellent way”, the way of love.

“Love is the way” is a back-to-basics reminder of what it means for you and me to live out our faith in troubled times, instead of allowing the world to “squeeze you into its own mould” (Romans 12:2, JB Phillips NT). Instead of being conformed to our culture, Christ calls you and me to join his work to transform the world! And, love is the way.



All Saints Sunday—November 1

On Sunday, November 1, we celebrate “All Saints Sunday”. This ancient tradition invites us to remember those loved ones who have preceded us in death; especially those whose Christian faith made a deep impression upon us. In worship, we’ll continue our tradition of the past 12 years of lighting a candle for our church members who have deceased since last All Saints Sunday; and we will light candles for our own loved ones who have died.

For those worshipping at home, prepare your worship space with your own special candle(s) to light at the appropriate time. Use the chat feature, or texting, to let us know who you would like to hold in remembrance. Our livestream worship will include sharing these names and lighting a candle in our sanctuary.

For those participating in our in-person morning worship, we’ll be lighting candles of remembrance, one at a time, as we name our loved ones

For those who would like to come to the church but not worship inside, we’ll have a socially-distanced opportunity outside, to remember loved ones and to light a candle at our outdoor altar table. This will be set up near our W Market Street entrance to the sanctuary.

Last, we will celebrate the sacrament of Holy Communion during both worship services and invite those at home to join in by preparing your bread and grape juice. Those who join us for our in-person worship will have the option of receiving our pre-packaged communion elements to take home.

**Sunday
Livestream:**

**[Click Here
for Webpage](#)**

**The
Worship
Connection**



**Sanctuary
Worship:**

**[Click Here
to Register](#)**

Looking Ahead to December Worship

"Raise your voice... raise it; don't be afraid!" - Isaiah 40:9

The history of humanity is fraught with pain—especially the pain that comes accompanied by fear and leads to oppression and violence of one people against another. This is the world into which Jesus was born and through which his teachings would challenge and call for transformation.

The opening words of an anonymous Jewish poet, "I believe in the sun, even when the sun is not shining," were scrawled on a basement wall of the Cathedral of Cologne, Germany, during the Holocaust. The words were originally put to music by Z. Randall Stroope, and for this series, composer and professor, Mark Miller, has written an original music score which we will be using with permission.

This theme song for our season calls us to examine our penchant for annihilating fear by annihilating each other. The power of narrative and music will call us to a different, gracious, response—transformation and reconciliation through hope, love, joy, and peace. This Advent and Christmas, let us fill the night with music and light and affirm and act on the reasons why we can still "believe, even when" we are discouraged.



Nov 29 – Advent 1 - "Hope for Tomorrow (I Believe in the Sun)"
Isaiah 40:1-11; Mark 1:1-15

Dec 6 – Advent 2 – "Daring to Love (I Believe in Love)"
Isaiah 7:7-14; Matthew 1:1-25
Holy Communion

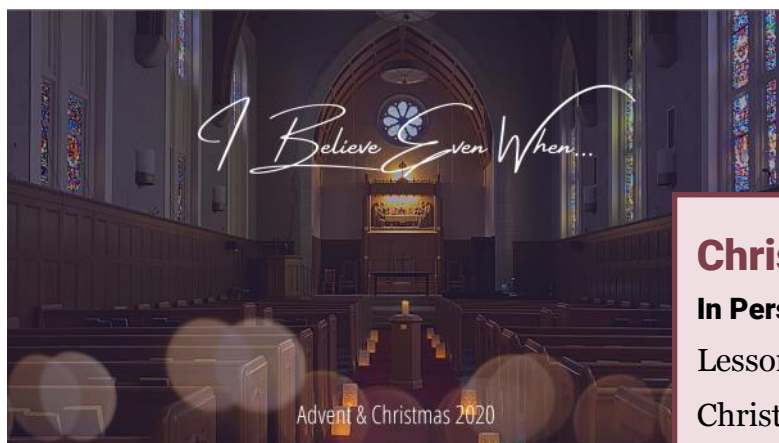
Dec 13 – Advent 3 – "The Sound and Significance of Joy
(I Believe in God)"
Isaiah 57:14-19; Luke 1:1-4; 26-56

Dec 20 – Advent 4 – "The Light of Peace
(I Believe in the Light)"
Isaiah 9:2-7; John 1:1-18

Blue Christmas December 6, 5 pm

On the evening of Sunday, December 6, we will have a "Blue Christmas" tree/candle/luminary lighting to acknowledge our many losses, and bear witness to the hope and comfort of the gospel during what for many is a difficult season.

Stay tuned for more details.



Christmas Eve 2020

In Person:

Lessons & Carols - Noon, in the Sanctuary

Christmas Eve Vigil - 4:30, Outdoors

Online:

Family service - Online, recorded

Lessons & Carols - Online, recorded

CLT Corner: Highlights from your Church Leadership Team

This Month: Trustees, SPRC, and Finance

Trustees

The Trustees have remained busy during the pandemic. Along with the church staff, we took measures to reduce utility usage in the currently under used areas of our buildings and also reduced our insurance premiums. Basic maintenance has continued using our team's talents as well as great help from the church youth.

We have signed a new two-year lease with Blossom and Bloom and taken measures to help them with their service to the community during these difficult times.

ADT has been authorized to begin a much needed upgrade to the fire alarm system in the main building. The existing system does not comply with the current building codes, isn't audible in all parts of the building and has had connection issues with wireless components. A large portion of the costs will be covered by a generous donation and also through use of a small portion of the Kitty Boyd memorial fund for work in the original 1852 building.

In 2021 the trustees plan to have the rubber membrane roof over the church offices, parlor and elevator replaced. We've been finding and repairing holes yearly and a few larger ones developed this year which were professionally patched. However, we were told that the roof is beyond periodic fixes.

~ Dwight Stonerook, Trustee Chair

SPRC

The LUMC Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committee is charged with several important duties and responsibilities that include working with the staff and the congregation to focus on the mission of the church by promoting unity and encouraging, strengthening, nurturing, supporting, and respecting the pastor(s), staff, and their families.

Much of the SPRC's work centers on the staff in developing and approving written job descriptions; recommending to the CLT written policies and procedures for staff actions (e.g., hiring, evaluations, etc.); recommending to the Committee on Finance and CLT staff salary actions; and, providing counsel to the pastor(s) and lay staff regarding their relationships with the congregation and conditions within the congregation that could affect those relationships.

Given the SPRC is centered around staff issues (e.g., staff actions, compensation, etc.), the Book of Discipline requires that any discussions or actions taken be kept within the SPRC. It is important to note that the SPRC has been actively involved with the Finance Committee and CLT to determine how best to maintain our current staff given the budget shortfall we're facing in 2020 and 2021.

~ Ken James, SPRC Chair

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Finance

The COVID-19 pandemic has made for an anomalous year financially for the church. Our giving and expenses are both down dramatically this year. The following chart summarizes both giving and income through the first 3 quarters of the year from 2014-2020.

Our lower expenses are seen in most every category, but the primary drivers have been the reduced apportionment and Trustee expenses.

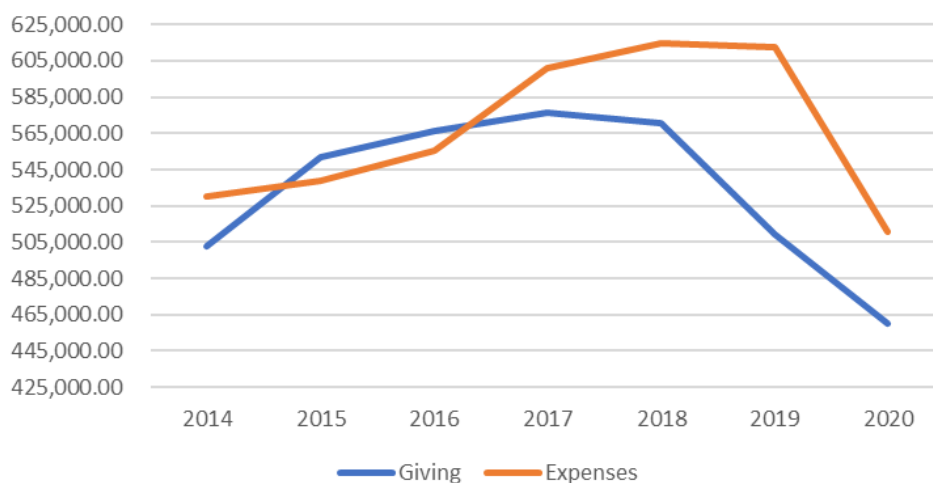
LUMC will end 2020 in a healthy financial position thanks to our lower expenses this year and the CARES Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan of \$88,500. The loan is expected to be forgiven.

The 2021 budget reflected a serious CLT effort to align our expense accounts with income in 2 years. Our expenses will increase once our buildings are utilized similarly to pre-COVID usage. The following chart shows giving versus expenses (2020 values are projected) from 2014-2020.

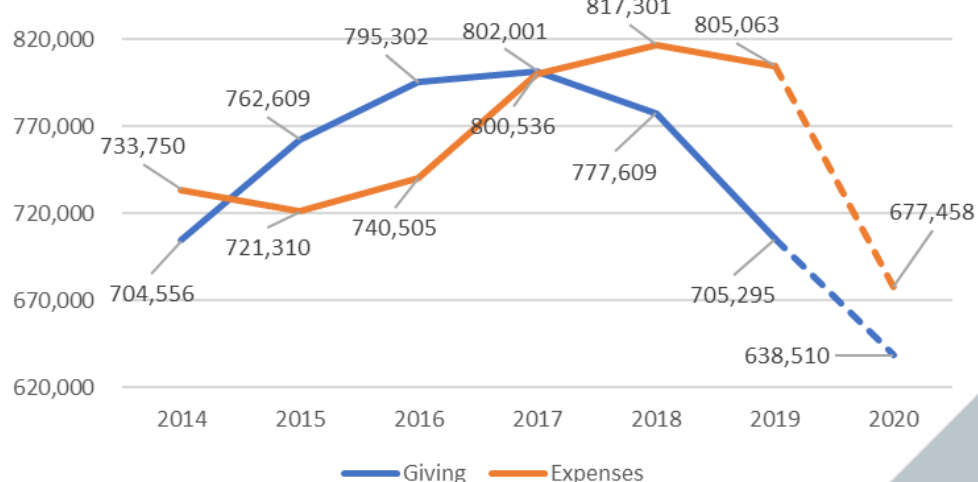
LUMC's debt was refinanced this year at a favorable interest rate after receiving an incredibly generous donation of \$150,000 and our current debt is \$149,105. We are paying a minimum of \$8,000 monthly toward the debt. Our debt is expected to be eliminated by April 2022.

Lastly, our church reserve balance remains healthy. Subtracting the imminent Trustee fire alarm project cost, our present reserve level is \$150,000. Upon receiving forgiveness of our CARES PPP loan, our reserves are expected to be in the \$230,000-\$240,000 range at year end.

Annual Comparison of Giving vs. Expenses Q1-Q3



Annual Giving vs Expenses



~ Tom Payne, Finance Chair



Angela Becek,
Director of
Discipleship
Ministries

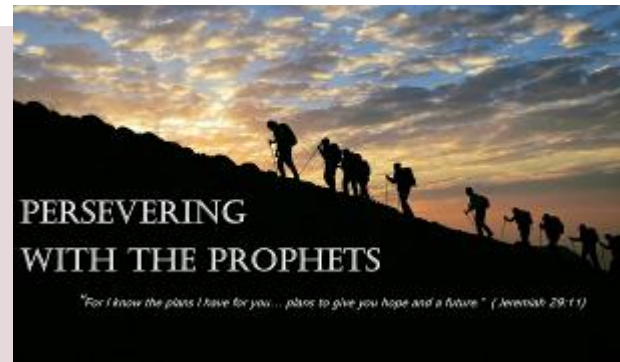
Bible Adventure: Persevering with the Prophets

Join us in November for Persevering with the Prophets, and spend about an hour preparing for Advent by exploring the stories of the Exile through Jeremiah, Daniel and Esther.

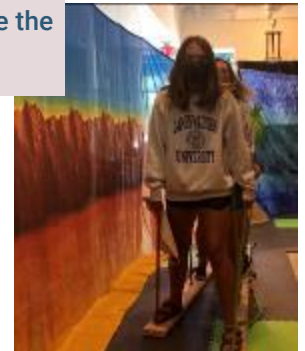
Our actors, and our friends with the Bible Project, will tell the story via engaging videos as you move through the areas we've staged to help tell the tale.

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 and October, we've had over 90 people experience the stories of the Old Testament through the Bible Adventure!



What about Health and Safety?

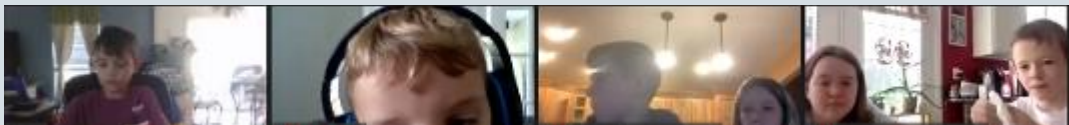
- Each family (household/bubble) will schedule a timed entry.
- One group at a time, with a minimum of one hour between groups to clear the air.
- All frequently touched surfaces will be cleaned between groups.
- Hand sanitizing stations will be placed within, and sinks will be available for hand washing.
- 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 held our final trip of the season to JK Community Farm on October 10. We harvested peppers and planted Swiss chard which will all go to Loudoun Hunger Relief and other area food banks.



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 assembled and delivered to families' homes each month, so that kids can participate.



Message from Pastor Jim

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“Therefore, whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone – especially to those in the family of faith.” Galatians 6:10
(*Doing good to others radiates outwards.*)



We choose to do good because of we are called by Jesus to the way of love, God's love.

In his book, Love is the Way: Holding on to Hope in Troubled Times, Bishop Michael Curry writes about the importance of each and every person choosing to love. The choice to love is not about warm feelings. It is about life-giving and love-showing actions in the lives of those around us. He shares about Father Andrew, a Botswanian Anglican Priest in Gaborone, the capital city. After relating a story about a young girl with undiagnosed polio who gradually learned to walk with crutches, he quotes Father Andrew, who said of his church's work with the poor, "We believe that God has something better in store for every child. And it's our job to help each child find out what that is and then live."

Bishop Curry's message (and I believe Jesus' message) is your love matters. He concludes, "The more we listen to love – let it guide us through life – the faster we find that... intersection where our deep gladness and the world's hunger meet and walk the path of love together." (Love is the Way, p.119).

Listen. Can you hear it? Will we live it? In this election year; in this COVID year; in this year of deep pain, protest, and quest for racial reconciliation; anger, blame, division, violence, hateful speech, false promises will not lead us where we need to go. Love is the way. Let's walk the path together.

"Love the Lord your God, walk in all his ways..." Joshua 22:5

Rev. Jim Wishmyer

Friends and Followers Small Group

Friends and Followers small group will be reading Incarnation: Rediscovering the Significance of Christmas by Adam Hamilton. This study will be November 29 - December 20 at 4pm via Zoom. Please contact Steve and Celesta Miller if you are interested, csmiller94@verizon.net.

Learn the meaning behind the names of Christ and the difference He makes in our lives this Christmas.

His parents gave him the name Jesus. But the prophets, the shepherds, the wise men, and the angels addressed him by other names. They called him Lord, Messiah, Savior, Emmanuel, Light of the World, and Word Made Flesh. In Incarnation: Rediscovering the Significance of Christmas, best-selling author Adam Hamilton examines the names of Christ used by the gospel writers, exploring the historical and personal significance of his birth. This Advent season church families will come together to remember what's important. In the face of uncertainty and conflict, Christians reclaim the Christ child who brings us together, heals our hearts, and calls us to bring light into the darkness. Now more than ever, we invite you to reflect upon the significance of the Christ child for our lives and world today!

Preparing Advent Wreaths for Worship at Home

Advent is right around the corner (November 29), and we are encouraging each family and individuals to prepare for the season of Advent by making sure they have an Advent wreath. Some of you may already have a wreath in your Christmas decorations, if that is the case, we ask that you set it up and light it as we worship together on Sunday mornings.

If you don't have a wreath, there is plenty of time to prepare one. Below are examples of wreaths that you might be able to put together based on what you have at home or can easily purchase around town. The basic and most essential element to have is four candles and a way to light them. You can use battery operated tea lights, tall white pillar candles and wrap coordinating pink and purple ribbons on them, or you can use the traditional pink and purple taper candles. Below are some images for your inspiration with descriptions of the materials used to create an Advent wreath.

ADVENT WREATH IDEAS

This example uses toilet paper rolls, a paper towel roll for the Christ candle, and pink and purple construction paper for the outside of the candles. You could also use paint to paint the rolls the appropriate color. They use tissue paper to create the flames and this could be added each Sunday. A perfect wreath for those with small children.



the lights on a plate with evergreens beneath the lights. This would be a great option if you'd like to light your wreath daily when you turn on your Christmas tree.

This is a very simple Advent wreath with four pillar white candles on a plate with evergreens and holly berries decorating it. You might also consider placing one like this in front of a Nativity scene if you have one at home.



This is a traditional advent wreath. You can purchase the taper candles online as well as the wreath base and candles. You could then place fake or real evergreens around it to add a festive touch.

This wreath uses battery operated tea lights. They have washi tape (pink and purple) around the lights, though construction paper would work as well. They have placed



This is a clever wreath is made out of green play dough, pink and purple birthday candles, and a tea light. You shape the dough into a ball, press the tea light into the middle, and place the candles around the outside. You might see they also added some confetti to the top of the playdough for a bit of festive fun. This would be a great option for someone who has limited space. If you have multiple folks in your family who insist on lighting or blowing out the candles let them each make their own with this method and avoid bickering over who gets to do what on Sunday morning.





**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; J.K. Community Farms; Heritage Hall; Blossom & Bloom Thrift Shop; Great Beginnings Recess Run

Where we continue to serve and need your help:

Neighbors Serving Neighbors: At the beginning of the pandemic over 50 congregation members stepped up to serve those most at risk during COVID 19 with tasks like grocery shopping, yard work, and other needs. Currently we have sign up for Walter Halfmann. Walter needs rides (Monday–Friday) to and from chemo now through the New Year. If you are able to help please [contact Rev. Heather](#).

Loudoun Hunger Relief Drop Off: The first Tuesday of every month we are collecting for LHR. Please bring non perishable items to donate to LHR who are dealing with an influx of clients and are in need of healthy food for their clients. As the holidays begin their needs grow. Please consider donating extra food in these next two months.

Salvation Army Angel Tree: LUMC plans to continue its long-running tradition of sponsoring the Salvation Army Christmas Angel Tree during the month of November. The special tree with its tags of gift requests has always been in Wesley Hall; however, some changes are in planned this year due to the pandemic.



Watch for forthcoming announcements by email, church website and the weekly LUMC Head Start for Sunday as to tag selection instructions: when gift selection will begin and how it will be done.

This is a new adventure for all of us, and we hope for great participation in bringing joy to the 25 children who will be represented on the tree. Deadline for gift deliveries to the church will be Saturday, December 4; otherwise, pickup at your home can be arranged with Jack and Amber King, Angel Tree Coordinators. (703-737-0365, jackandamberking@aol.com).

Backpack Buddies: We are back in full swing this year, supporting students at Catoctin Elementary School with breakfast, lunch and dinner over the weekend. Although it was a bit of a bumpy start, we are gaining momentum and working hard to reach all of the children in need.

We are asking volunteers to sign up to pack food as either a family or individual; food will be set out in Wesley Hall for the volunteers to bag. The dates this month will be Nov. 19, 20, 21 and 22. Packing is via online registration, so only one person/family packs at a time. [Click here for the registration page](#) with currently available dates/times.

Besides people to pack, we also need donations of food and money. 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

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(Continued from page 10)

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.

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



BACKPACK BUDDIES

Covid-Related Utility Assistance

The COVID19 Emergency Relief Fund and Helpline operated in collaboration with Loudoun Cares and Catholic Charities can provide up to \$1750/household in utility payment to qualifying Loudoun residents affected by this crisis.

Residents in need should call the Helpline at 703-669-5040 and leave a message.

Advent Film Club

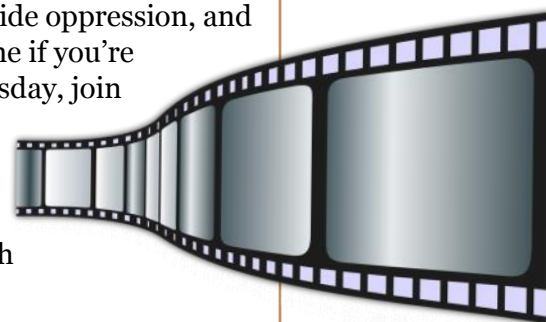
You have a book club? Try a film club for Advent.

Our worship theme for Advent and Christmas comes from the Worship Design Studio series, "I Believe Even When..." This theme draws inspiration and hope from the song, "Inscription of Hope," whose words found were found written on a basement wall of the Cathedral of Cologne, Germany. The words were written, it is believed, by a child of one of the many Jewish families who hid in the cathedral at various times during the Nazi persecution.

I'll be hosting a film club during Advent that follows an incredible guide prepared by Worship Design Studio. This guide highlights five different documentary film clips that dramatically demonstrate the power of music during difficult and even seemingly hopeless circumstances.

Beginning Tuesday, November 24, 11 am, via Zoom, and for each Tuesday until December 22, we will see for example how those imprisoned in a concentration camp, a group of incarcerated young women, a country yearning for freedom from outside oppression, and more, give witness to the transforming grace of music. [Email](#) or text me if you're interested, or simply [sign up here](#). Even if you cannot make every Tuesday, join in anyway, as we discover how others were able to "fill the night with music and light"!

For those not able to join a group discussion via Zoom, there is a version for personal devotion during Advent. Contact me or the church office for details.



Rev. Jim Wishmyer

Leesburg United Methodist Church

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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!

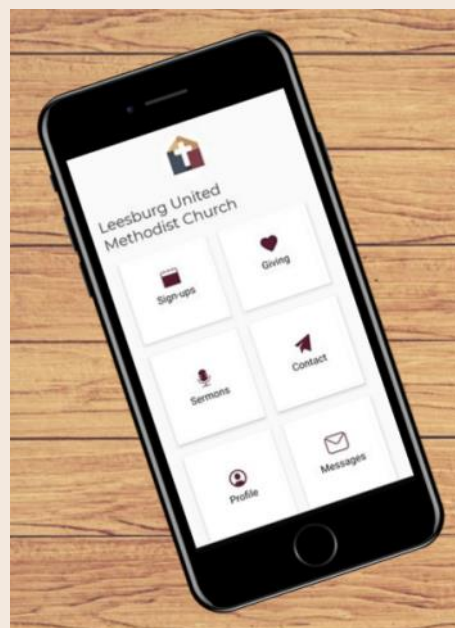
Our new app (available for Android and Apple devices) will help you find event sign-ups, listen to recent sermons, make it easy to give using credit card or direct debit from your bank account, and contact us for general questions or prayer requests.

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:

