

# THE MESSENGER

The newsletter of Leesburg United Methodist Church

## December 2020

Volume 33—Issue 7 (published 11/25/20)



### Inside This Issue:

**Message from Pastor Jim: Wonder** --- [1](#), [8](#)

#### Connect

December Worship ----- [2](#)

Blue Christmas; Christmas Eve ----- [3](#)

Covid-19 Update for Worship, Events ----- [8](#)

Christmas Readers Needed ----- [9](#)

Advent Wreath Reminder ----- [9](#)

Neighborhood Groups ----- [11](#)

January—“Immerse: Messiah” ----- [15](#)

Santa Letter ----- [18](#)

#### Grow

Bible Adventure:

    Journey to Bethlehem ----- [6](#)

Youth and Kids ----- [7](#)

Advent Film Club with Pastor Jim ----- [9](#)

Persevering with the Prophets—

    a Closer Look ----- [12](#), [13](#)

Bible Adventures: Thank You ----- [14](#)

#### Reach

Mission Central—LHR, LHSC, Birmingham

    Greene, Neighbors Serving Neighbors;

    Backpack Buddies ----- [10](#)

Reverse Advent Calendar for LHR ----- [11](#)

LUMW: Faith, Hope, Love in Action ----- [16](#), [17](#)

#### Steward

CLT Corner: CLT, MLT, Finance, SPRC ---- [4](#), [5](#)

Stewardship Update ----- [15](#)

Winchester District ----- [19](#)

Year-End Giving Reminder ----- [19](#)

Angel Tree Update ----- [19](#)

LUMC’s App and Online Giving ----- [20](#)

### Message from Pastor Jim: “Wonder”



**Rev. Jim  
Wishmyer,  
Pastor**

This word popped into my head uninvited, along with a particularly meaningful memory. Several years ago, a good friend told me of his incredible experience of God while sitting in a small church sanctuary on Christmas Eve. Although growing up in the church, it had been a long time since he had been in a worship service, including Christmas and Easter. For some reason, when this time his wife asked him to come with her to a late night Christmas Eve worship, instead of making excuses he made up his mind to join her. She hid her surprise well.

Sitting in the small sanctuary, hearing the small, elderly choir members sing a familiar carol, he looked up. All of a sudden, the ceiling of the sanctuary and roof disappeared and he was staring up at the starlit sky. Against this backdrop a vision of heaven appeared that was difficult to describe. It usually is – when it is real; for heaven and the supernatural cannot be adequately described in our limited concrete terms. It can only be experienced.

*(Continued on page 8)*

## 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



**Sanctuary  
Worship:**

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



**The  
Worship  
Connection**



**Sunday  
Livestream:**

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

## Blue Christmas – Sunday, December 6

**Unprecedented.** This is the most used adjective to describe 2020. Family, friends, neighbors have experienced unprecedented loss, disappointment, grief. Our Advent theme, “I Believe Even When...” proclaims Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace this season, in the midst of personal and communal difficulty.

This is the church’s gift to the world – life grounded in the message that God came and dwelt among us in the midst of hardship. This message carries added significance when we realize that the Christmas season often heightens our sense of loss. Meaningful rituals of faith enable many to acknowledge our lament, and to move through these feelings with authenticity; and even a measure of healing. God comes near.

**This year, of all years, we especially need “Blue Christmas”;  
a time to pause, to remember, to hurt, to grieve... and to heal.**

Our simple **Blue Christmas observance is Sunday, December 6, anytime between 5 pm and 7 pm, on the Courthouse lawn.** Experience an opportunity to extend to our community – and to each other – the loving embrace of our God who grieves with us, and who walks with us through the pain. You’ll be able to briefly write your loss on a light blue luminary bag, hear or read words of lament and comfort, place a small blue led candle inside the bag, and place your grief alongside others around our Blue Spruce tree. Look on as we “light up the night with... light.”

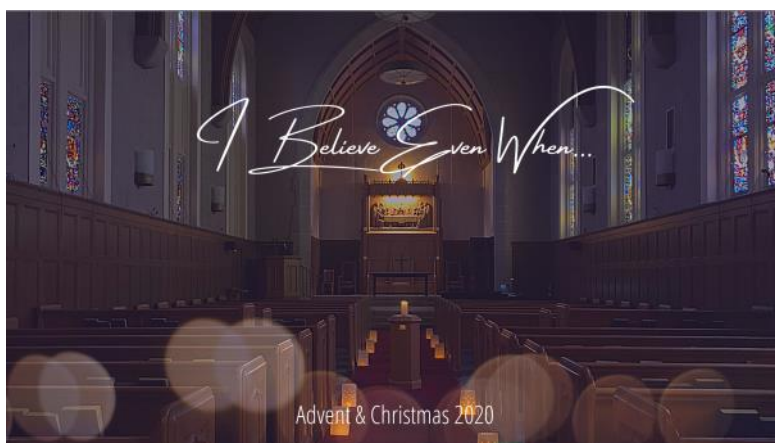
**Expect:** 6 feet of physical distancing, face masks required, hand sanitizer provided; and the powerful visual of a tree surrounded by blue lights of grief and loss, yet together lighting up the darkness with hope.

**Not ready or able to come out In person?**

**Submit your loss online and we’ll add a luminary bag for you, so your loss can be part of the light!**

**Coming In person? Please pre-register.**

**(Help needed with set-up, “greeters”, and take-down - contact the church office or Rev. Wishmyer)**



## 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: CLT, MLT, Finance**

### CLT

Your church leadership teams have been striving to keep you updated on what is happening within the church's administrative committees during this challenging year. This month we are highlighting activities within the Mission Leadership Team. In addition, we are creating a directory on the church's SharePoint site to post all minutes from the respective administrative meetings in a single location (this will exclude the SPRC minutes which must remain confidential). We hope, that in this way any member of our congregation that wishes to read over them may have access.

If you already have access to the LUMC SharePoint site, you can navigate to the Council Committees folder and then to the Committee Minutes folder. We have populated it with a sample from October and our goal will be to post all minutes in December. If you need access to SharePoint please contact Linda in the church office.

*~ Dave Reith, CLT Chair*

### MLT: Ministry Leadership Team

In this trying year of COVID-19 and all the challenges that has brought us as a church, your Ministry Leadership Team (MLT) would like to celebrate with you how we as a church family met these challenges and served God and ministered to each other and our community.

#### **Reach:**

The Pandemic Relief Fund was established and through your generosity we supported Loudoun Hunger Relief, the Ampersand Project, and Backpack Buddies. These organizations saw a tremendous increase in need due to the pandemic which we were able to help meet.

Our UMW unit supported Heritage Hall with weekly snack deliveries for the staff through the summer as they were in COVID lockdown. The UMW also assembled 158 hygiene kits for conference, using safe distance and mask precautions.

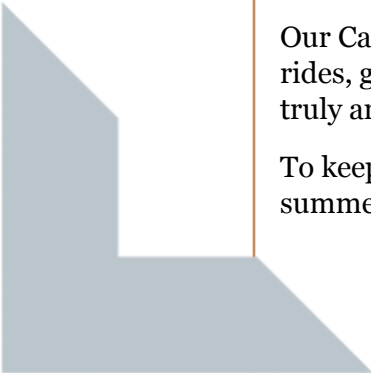
#### **Connect:**

Our Worship team stepped up to the challenge of virtual worship by developing a live-streaming service, outdoor in-person communion services, and return to in-person worship within health guidelines. There has been a tremendous amount of volunteer effort to determine the technology needed and creative ways to bring us a meaningful worship service complete with music and testimony.

Our Care team has been staying in touch with members in need of support by arranging rides, grocery pickup, and meal delivery. We have stepped up to meet those needs. We truly are a congregation who cares for its members!

To keep us in connection and fellowship, Neighborhood Groups were launched this summer. These groups were formed based on the geographic location of the members.

*(Continued on page 5)*



(Continued from page 4)

This effort is in response to our inability to see each other in worship and other gatherings on a regular basis. The Forever Young group stays in connection with each other through weekly emails.

### **Grow:**

Because traditional Christian education/learning formats have not been possible during the pandemic, our Grow team has been conducting Sunday school virtually. VBS was held virtually twice weekly through the summer. Craft kits are assembled by volunteers and sent home to the families monthly for use during Sunday school.

The Youth have rebooted their program and turned their focus on outdoor service events that allow for fellowship at the same time. Over the summer they worked the fields at JK Community Farms, LUMC cleanup; and Camp Highroad cleanup and repairs. They will continue this model through the Fall/Winter 2020-2021.

Our newest initiative, Bible Adventures, was launched this summer as an opportunity for all members to have a hands on experience of learning the Biblical story through engaging and challenging activities.

Please take time to thank God for his provisions to us at this most difficult time and to congratulate ourselves for all that we have managed to accomplish even when we cannot gather together. We are truly a family of Christians that serves God, ministers to each other, and cares for our community.

*~ Polly Downey, MLT Leader*

### **Finance**

2020 has challenged us in many ways individually and as a church. We are now in the season for us to give thanks and soon we will be celebrating the joy and gift of Christmas.

The months of November and December are the most important months of giving for churches. We hope as you reflect to give thanks for all God has blessed you with and as you prepare to celebrate the joy of Jesus' birth that you are able to give generously to the church so we can finish the year strong.

*~ Tom Payne, Finance Chair*

### **Christmas Love Gift for Staff**

Brothers and Sisters in Christ: the time has come again to show our appreciation for the Staff of LUMC. Please make your contribution and mark on your check "Christmas Love offering" and place in offering plate, or use the [online Special Donations form](#) and select the fund "Christmas Love Gift for staff".

Thank you, Staff Parish Relations Committee





**Angela Becek,  
Director of  
Discipleship  
Ministries**

## **Bible Adventure: Journey to Bethlehem**

The Journey to Bethlehem features kids, youth and adults from our church family retelling the story of Jesus' birth in the 2020est Christmas Pageant Ever with your favorite Christmas music from Raising Praise!

Set-up as a walk through experience, you'll move from one part of the story to the next and Each station has a special set design to help enhance the story. Your family (or bubble) will be the only people in the building, along with one host.

Please enter the AG from the Liberty Street door and you will exit through the front door on Market Street.

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



### **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.

## Youth and Kids

Since November of 2004, our youth have participated in the Conference led Fall Retreats in Lynchburg. We couldn't do that this year, so we spent a day at Camp High Road, staying outside, wearing masks and participating in activities that allow good fellowship while maintaining distance. With no summer camps this year and reduced staff and income, the camp has appreciated our regular trips to offer our help.



*Kirsten and Sarah prepare their horses for a nice ride.*



*Nick poses with his great shot! We spent about two hours at the archery range.*

*We got a hayride to our service project, which was to clear off the pool.*



*We finished our time with a campfire, some games and a reflection.*



**Our Sunday School kids continue to meet virtually each week at 9 am.** Margrit Snyder leads with some ice breakers, crafts, science projects and prayers. Heather Gonzalez leads music and Chris Becak tells the Bible story each week. They use the Bible Storybook and follow along with the themes from the Bible Adventures.



Sign up for [December Sunday School here.](#)

## Message from Pastor Jim

*(Continued from page 1)*

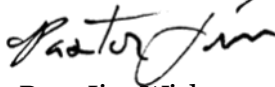
It was real. It was unexpected. It was beautiful. It was personal. And from that moment on, it led him on the path of faith and discovery to eventually welcome Jesus back into his heart and life.

“The most wonderful time of the year” set the stage for a moment of wonder which led to a journey of wondering culminating in knowing the One who is called “Wonderful”\* (Isaiah 9:6).

In our journey through Advent, what are you wondering? When COVID will end? How our far-flung family members are doing? What will 2021 bring? Will the message of Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace wrapped in the Incarnation make a difference in our lives and in our world in 2020?

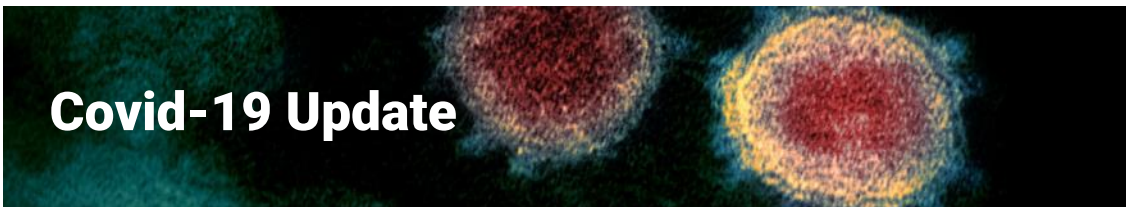
I pray that God brings a little wonder into your life this Advent and Christmas, so that when we “wonder what will happen next?” we do so with hopeful anticipation.

Grace and peace to you and all you love (which just about covers everyone),



Rev. Jim Wishmyer

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*\* Wonder - what a “wonderful” word that can express so many meanings! We all could use a little more wonder.*



As many are aware, our Virginia Governor, Ralph Northam, has issued [new guidelines for groups](#), limiting the number to 25 indoors or outdoors. This in-person limit does not currently (as of Nov 24) apply to worship services. It does apply to other church activities, however.

Right now, we are continuing with our in-person worship services on Sundays and other special services during Advent: Blue Christmas (Dec. 6, 5 pm-7 pm, Loudoun Courthouse grounds), Christmas Eve (Noon, sanctuary; 4:30 pm, Ida Lee).

**Should the local health conditions deteriorate, or there are new guidelines from our Governor, we will adjust these in-person worship events accordingly.**

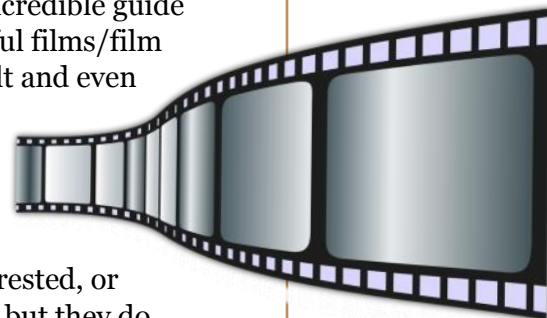
Thank you for your prayers, your patience, and above all your contribution to keeping all of us safer – 6 ft physical distancing, wearing masks when in public, using hand sanitizer, etc.



## Advent Film Club

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.

Pastor Jim will be hosting a film club during Advent that follows an incredible guide prepared by Worship Design Studio. This guide highlights five powerful films/film clips that dramatically demonstrate the power of music during difficult and even seemingly hopeless circumstances: “Defiant Requiem”, “Girls on the Wall”, “Following the Ninth”, “Sweet Honey on the Rock: Raise Your Voice”, and “The Singing Revolution”.



**Beginning Tuesday, November 24, 11 am, via Zoom, and for each Tuesday until December 22.** [Email Pastor Jim](#) if you’re interested, or simply [sign up here](#). Join us for any week as these are not cumulative, but they do coincide with the weekly message theme. For those not able to join a group discussion via Zoom, there is a version for personal devotion during Advent. [Contact the church office](#) for details.

**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”!**

### Christmas Readers—Recorded and In-Person

**Recorded:** Rev. Heather needs of individuals to read scripture for our pre-recorded Lessons and Carols Christmas Eve service. Readers will be recorded at church in the sanctuary by Rev. Heather. If you are interested, please [email Rev. Heather](#) at [heather.wray@leesburgumc.org](mailto:heather.wray@leesburgumc.org).

**In-person:** Scripture readers needed for our Noon and 4:30 pm in-person Christmas Eve worship. Noon will be in our sanctuary; 4:30 pm will be outside at Ida Lee (approximately ½ hour “lessons and carols” worship). Please contact the [church office](#), [Rev. Wray](#), or [Rev. Wishmyer](#).

Thanks!

## Advent Wreaths for Worship at Home

The November Messenger included a full page article with ideas and suggestions for several types of Advent Wreaths you can make and use at home. The first Sunday of Advent is November 29, so it’s not too late to make one now! See the article on Page 9 of the November newsletter—[find it online here](#).





**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; Camp Highroad.

### Where we continue to serve and need your help:

**Loudoun Hunger Relief Reverse Advent Calendar:** During the season of Advent you can collect items for LHR. See [calendar on p. 11](#). Every day we'll have an item for you to place under your tree for LHR and at the end of the Advent season take all you've collected and drop them off at the church or LHR. If you have questions [contact Rev. Heather](#).

**Homeless Services Center :** Our Neighborhood Groups will be collecting items (warm socks, energy bars, hand warmers, gloves, etc.) to put together presents for 25 men who are guests of the Homeless Service Center. If you have questions [contact Rev. Heather](#).

**Birmingham Greene:** The UMW continues to be hard at work serving their neighbors. They will be putting together gifts for the nursing home and assisted living residents that are from Loudoun County at Birmingham Greene in Manassas. They will create around 36 gifts for residents there. For more information [contact Betsy Creamer](#).

**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. We have a Meal Train sign up for Karen Daley who is going through radiation. We will have another Meal Train for the Graves family who welcomed their third baby in November. If you are able to help please [contact Rev. Heather](#).

**Backpack Buddies:** For your Christmas gift-giving this year, and all year long, please remember the Backpack Buddies program supported by our church. Without the support of donations from our congregation, we cannot continue to provide meals to children in need at the Catoctin Elementary School. Monetary donations are most welcome, as it allows us to purchase food items in bulk at a cheaper cost, but any food items are always gratefully accepted and can be left in the Missions Room next to the office.

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 Dec. 10, 11, 12, and 13.** Paking is via online registration, so only one person/family packs at a time. [Click here for the registration page](#) with currently available dates/times.

*Food items to donate:* 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.



## Neighborhood Groups

This spring we launched Neighborhood Groups across our congregation. Neighborhood Groups are groups of folks in our congregation who live in a similar geographic area. While they have not been able to gather our Neighborhood Group leaders have been busy helping people connect. In the early summer we were able to coordinate Outdoor Communion and into the fall the Neighborhood Group leaders have been checking in regularly on their neighbors and bringing them themed care packages.

It has been wonderful to see the way connections and friendships have been formed through this process. This December they will join together in their first service project to create gift bags for the men at the Homeless services center. If you don't have a Neighborhood Group or want to learn more about them please [contact Rev. Heather at heather.wray@leesburgumc.org](mailto:heather.wray@leesburgumc.org).



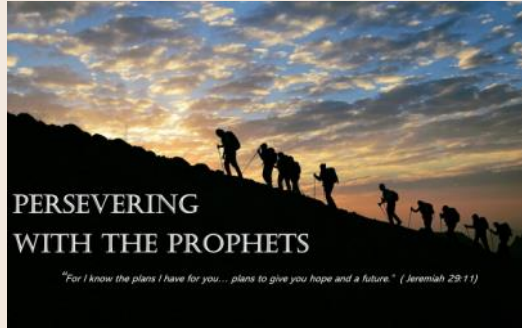
## Leesburg UMC Reverse Advent Calendar for LHR

- |   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| Day 1: Dry Beans                            | Day 18: Cooking Spray             |
| Day 2: Whole grain pasta                    | Day 19: Flour                     |
| Day 3- Whole grain Rice                     | Day 20: Sugar (brown/granulated)  |
| Day 4: Cereal                               | Day 21: Vanilla Extract           |
| Day 5: Hot Cereal (oatmeal, cream of wheat) | Day 22: Chocolate Chips           |
| Day 6: Canned Tuna                          | Day 23: Baking powder/soda        |
| Day 7: Canned Chicken                       | Day 24: Canned veggies            |
| Day 8: Mac n Cheese (boxed)                 | Day 25: Laundry Item              |
| Day 9: Peanut or Nut Butter                 | Day 26: Toilet paper/Paper towels |
| Day 10: Jelly or jam (pasteurized)          | Day 27: Cleaning item             |
| Day 11: Chicken Noodle Soup                 | Day 28: Fruit Cups                |
| Day 12: Tomato Soup                         |                                   |
| Day 13: Gluten Free Crackers or Cookies     |                                   |
| Day 14: Crackers (Ritz, Goldfish, etc.)     |                                   |
| Day 15: Cookies (animal, graham, oreo)      |                                   |
| Day 16: Muffin or Bread Mix                 |                                   |
| Day 17: Cooking Oil                         |                                   |

Alternative Option:  
Place an envelope on the tree and place any amount of money in it each day. At the end of Advent decide where you'll donate the money you collected.

## Persevering with the Prophets: Take a Closer Look!

Get a better idea of what to expect from a chapter of the “Bible Adventure” with this look at November’s chapter, “Persevering with the Prophets.”



Changing the set-up from one chapter to the next is a big job. Here, the Gonzalez boys help clean up from Expedition Promised Land! (October).

### An Exercise in Perseverance:



Janice and Carl and Margrit persevered through the desert toward Babylon while pushing along a little ball that represents the things they have a hard time letting go of.



Learning Patience: Victoria and Sabrina planting basil upon arriving in Babylon after Jeremiah (Jack King) explained that God told the people in Exile to settle in, plant crops and wait—while reminding them that God had good plans for them.



Stories and Fear: Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego (Wyatt, Colt and Sawyer Gonzalez) explain how they ended up in the fiery furnace and how God sent an angel to comfort and protect them.

Then, visitors wrote their fear onto a flame sticker and stuck it to the furnace.





**Storytellers:** Daniel (Kyle Miller) shared his story of having to leave Jerusalem for Exile and of knowing God's peace while enduring a night in the Lion's Den.



**Song and Story:** Esther (Stephanie Reed) shared through song about her decision to go before the king to save her people.



Sabrina poses in the "king's chamber" in the AG where our guests learned the story of Esther from Stephanie and Matt Broglio on the tv screen.



**Teaching the Facts:** Robert Andrews narrated a short video that helped to bridge the four hundred year period from the return to Jerusalem and the birth of Jesus, reminding us that Advent is a season of expectant waiting, just as the Jewish people waiting for God to intervene in history—and we pray and hope for God's intervention today.



We supplement our own videos with videos from the Bible Project.

The Escape Room: this adds a fun twist for those who enjoy competition and helps to build community over the month, as new high scores are shared in the Facebook group.

Groups enter and learned about the Advent Wreath from a Chuck



Knows Church video, then were given their first clue.

(The Escape Room challenge is optional and we have different levels to keep you from getting too frustrated.)



Carl searches for a clue (above) Kayla and Grace (below) try to open one of the boxes—to free "captive Israel."



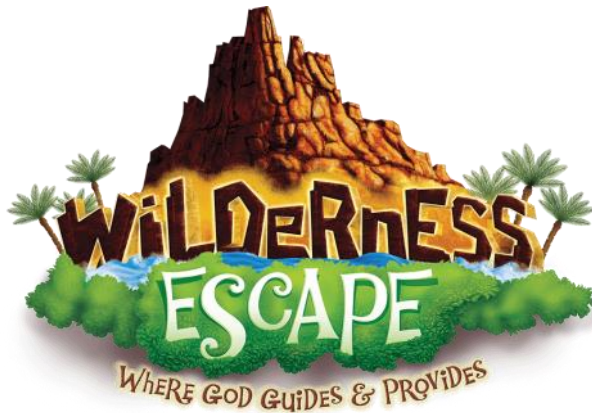
Dan, Charlotte and JD read the Bible verse clue (above) Daniel (below) thinks he's figured out the final clue



## Bible Adventures: Thank you!

Our Bible Adventures have featured the talents of many of our church members over the past few months, and we thank them heartily!

As we look into 2021, we hope to see more faces grace our screens and help tell the stories of the New Testament. If you're interested in participating, [please contact Angela](#). You'll come and film your part in the AG or Asbury with no one else around.

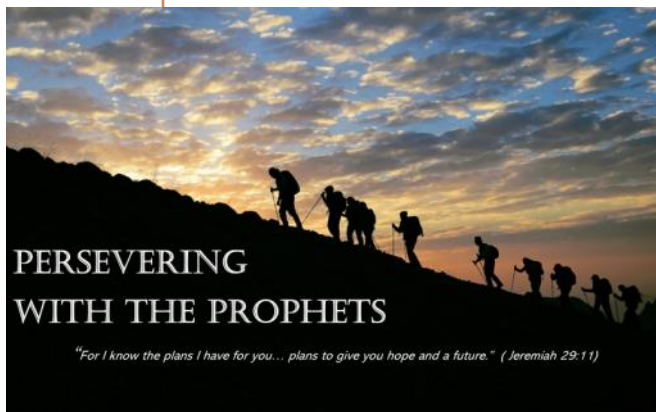


### September: Wilderness Escape

Moses: Keffen Frazee  
Joshua: Ty Grinnell  
Caleb: Caleb Boyer

### October: Expedition Promised Land

Joshua: Greg Grinnell  
Samuel: Dwight Stonerook  
Young David: Kyle Pepin  
King Saul: Chris Becek  
King David: Ray Ginman  
King Solomon: Nate Ginman



### November: Persevering with the Prophets

Daniel: Kyle Miller  
Jeremiah: Jack King  
Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego: Wyatt, Sawyer and Colt Gonzalez  
The Presence: Heather Gonzalez  
Esther Intro: Matt Broglio  
Esther: Stephanie Reed  
Intertestamental Period Narrator: Robert Andrews

## Looking Ahead to January – “Immerse: Messiah”

Imagine reading the bible more as a story, told chronologically without the distraction (for some) of verse numbers, chapter breaks, and translator-selected “subject headings”. This is the vision behind the “Immerse Bible,” an entirely different way of reading the scriptures than many of us are used to: as narrative story. From the website:

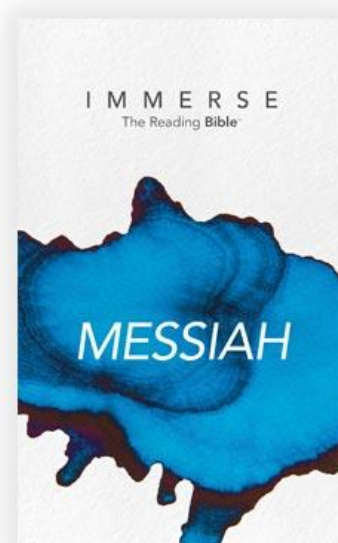
“The Immerse Bible Reading Experience offers a vibrant, transformative relationship with God and others through his Word. Each week, transparent community happens in Bible Book Clubs, where participants share their observations and questions based on their immersion in God’s Word. These warm and inviting group experiences set the table for life-changing Bible reading.”

In January, we’ll take a deep dive into “The Messiah” section of the Immerse Bible through Bible Book Clubs that will read and discuss together for 8 weeks, and through our sermon series. The Messiah tells the story chronologically of Jesus’ birth, life, death and resurrection, incorporating the four gospels and Acts into one.

Weekly videos will inform your reading and book club discussions. An audio bible is available for those who prefer to listen. A “Group Host Guide” can be used by any member of the book club to facilitate conversation. A “Family Guide” provides an abridged reading for kids with custom discussion questions for families to use. And more.

Pray about who you would like to join with in reading and discussing the story of The Messiah, beginning in January. This can be a doorway to inviting a family member or friend or neighbor who perhaps has questions about the bible. Watch for more details during December from your Neighborhood Group point person, small group leader, and other communication tools!

Contact the church office or Rev. Wishmyer for additional details and ways to sign up either individually or with your own Bible Book Club. You can order your own copy of “Immerse: Messiah”, the entire “Immerse: The Reading Bible,” (<https://www.tyndale.com/sites/immerse bible/messiah/>) or let us know and we can order it for you.



### Stewardship Campaign Update

As of November 24, we have received 65 pledges totaling \$429,163. Thank you to everyone who has made a financial commitment to LUMC for 2021.

You can still make your pledge by mailing in the paper card you received or [online here](#).

Thank you!



## LUMW: Faith, Hope, Love in Action

United Methodist Women – FAITH, HOPE, LOVE IN ACTION. That is the UMW emblem/brand. For 2020, the word “inaction” pops into my mind. I am thankful that our Leesburg UMW unit still has the faith-driven desire to be “in action”, even while apart.

Our 65 member unit is comprised of four small groups: Sunshine Circle, Hannah’s Sisters Circle, Katherine Eye Circle, and Susanna Wesley Circle. Usually our groups meet monthly, but not this year. Our Executive Committee met in February and March. Yet, we have communicated via email and phone, text message and regular mail, and continued supporting our UMW missions, and each other.

For the year 2020 our UMW Unit approved an annual budget of \$7,500. Our unit raises the money to support this budget, as we are not part of the LUMC operations budget.

We have been blessed to be able to complete our 2020 pledge (\$4,500 to mainly support UMW global missional work on behalf of women, children and youth) to our connectional group, the Winchester District UMW. We have supported our local missions/ministries as well. In the summer, we awarded one \$1,000 scholarship to a LUMC graduating senior. Local missions supported included: Great Beginnings Preschool (\$650 tuition scholarship); Henry Fork Service Center that serves the underprivileged in Rocky Mount, Virginia (\$100); the Ferrum College Scholarship Fund (\$100); and Wesley Community Service Center that serves the poor in Portsmouth, VA (\$100). We have been able to support these important missions/ministries due to the devoted UMW members who pledge annually to our unit, as well as past fundraisers supported by the entire LUMC congregation. Note, to be a LUMW member, there is no requirement to make a monetary pledge, but many members choose to do so. We are grateful for each pledge and each donation.



Luckily, before our “stay at home” lifestyle took over, we celebrated Valentine’s Day by honoring the Inova Hospital Pediatrics and Observation Unit staff members. Then, just before March we held our annual Grab & Go fundraiser for missions. We laughed as I brought hand sanitizer and tissues to our Winchester District Prayer Breakfast on March 7th, just one week before the pandemic prevention measures were enacted.

Even with our “inactive” year, our UMW Executive Committee participated for the first time, in the pecan sale fundraiser for the Wesley Community Service Center. Sending \$264 for support of their children’s summer program. Hopefully, in 2021 we can expand participation in this delicious way to the entire LUMC congregation!

*(Continued on page 17)*



(Continued from page 16)

Our unit also supported the front line staff of Heritage Hall Leesburg during the first months of their battle with Covid-19. Break time was their only time to relax and renew. We provided individually wrapped treats and drinks, flowers and more for their snack time. One week we delivered pizza lunch – 15 pizzas! We were honored to provide some love and hope through scripture messages accompanying their treats.



In September, we created 158 hygiene kits to support United Methodist Committee on Relief. Wearing masks, gloves and social distancing made kit making just a little more cumbersome than usual! Of course, kit collection also had to change due to the pandemic, so we will learn after Thanksgiving where we can deliver them!

What a perfect time this year was for catching up on a little reading! Our UMW reading program provided an opportunity for all members of the UMW to do just that. We read 76 books on the UMW Reading Program list this year. UMW reading list books are available in the LUMC Library for anyone in the congregation to enjoy, too!

While the operations of many non-profits have had to change during the Thanksgiving and Christmas season, our UMW will still be able to help a few of our community partners. Susanna Wesley Circle has provided gift cards to support a Loudoun Abused Women's Shelter family. Working with Loudoun County Social Services, our unit's annual gift shopping for Birmingham Green nursing home and assisted living residents will begin Thanksgiving week. These 35 residents once were active community members in Loudoun County, but now have little or no family support. Please pray for all of them, as we have faith that the gifts will bring the hope, love, joy and peace of Christmas to each of them.

I, along with many of you, have missed our unit and congregational annual gatherings this year – Circle meetings, Women in Friendship Dinner, Apple Dumpling making, Gathering of Angels, the Advent Prayer Breakfast, the cookie/craft sale, and circle Christmas gatherings.

Let's all continue to have FAITH and HOPE for a 2021 full of recovery, renewal, and most of all, LOVE for one another.

Happy Thanksgiving and Merry Christmas!  
*Betsy Creamer, LUMW President*

Dear LUMC Family,

Nate Simpson here. Many of you know me, but for those who do not I am the trombonist that occasionally plays at church. I also look like Santa, my wife is Suzie Simpson, and our children are Brianna and Curtis. I am writing today not as a member of LUMC, but as Santa. Yes, you are reading that right. I have added Santa to my retirement job skillset and wanted to let you know about a wonderful program that I am connected to called Santa Visits Storytime created by Susen Mesco. It is a group of about 50+ Santas, Mrs. Clauses, and Elves across the US and Canada that have created a FREE website where you can go with children to experience a wonderful wholesome collection of videos and shows (at last count there are over 1200). You will be able to find sing-alongs, book readings, crafts, magic shows, tea parties, lullabies, and so much more. All these activities and shows are FREE.

Once you are on the website you will also be able to sign up the family for My Santa Reports which is a wonderful free gift (normally \$10). It is an 8-week good behavior program where children get to tell me Santa all the wonderful things they are doing. They can earn a nice certificate, see their name on the nice list, report on their Elf on the Shelf, read the Gum Drop Gazette, and play games for ages 3-11. Such a fun activity to help with behavior and chore time during the holidays. There are even free letters from Santa, Mrs. Claus, and the head elf Buzz. There will only be money involved if you wish to schedule a Virtual Visit, Personalized Message, or a Virtual Party. And yes, we would love that, but it is not required.

We knew as a group that this year was going to be quite different and not the usual holiday fare but wanted to make sure that the joy of Christmas would still be there. You will find that on this website. Please visit us and let us help make your holidays joyful, happy, and fun (in a safe and healthy way).

I am so looking forward to connecting with you and your family in a Safe and Healthy way, and please feel free to share this info with friends, family, and co-workers. And lastly, please feel free to contact me with any further questions.

And a Safe, Healthy, Merry Christmas to you all.

Santa Nate , [santaallaround@gmail.com](mailto:santaallaround@gmail.com), Workshop-703-777-0710, Sleigh-703-915-8179

**Nate Simpson**  
our own Santa

**FREE! From Santa!**  
**North Pole Storytime**

1000+ Shows & Stories with Santa, Mrs. Claus & Elf Buzz! Sing Alongs, Crafts, Santa's reindeer, Christian Stories, ASL, Magic Shows, Puppet Shows, Tea Parties, Trains, FireTrucks, Airplanes & More!

**My Santa Reports**

Santa's 8 week Good Behavior Program. Earn your Official Nice Certificate! Update your Wish List! See your name on Santa's Nice List, Read North Pole News, Report your Elf on Shelf & More!

**FREE! Letter from Santa!**

**OPEN**  
Nov-Jan

**Virtual Visits Available**

**Personalized Messages Available**

**Virtual Group Parties Available**

Santa 2240

[www.SantaVisitsUSA.com](http://www.SantaVisitsUSA.com) Group Code: LUMC2240

## Changes to the Winchester District

Several weeks ago, it was announced that the VA Conference Director of Connectional Ministries, the Rev. Dr. Ted Smith, was taking a voluntary leave of absence. Bishop Lewis asked our DS, the Rev. Dr. Steve Summers, if he would take over this position and Rev. Summers accepted.

In the meantime, a Conference task force has been studying how we might re-align our 16 Districts - most likely reducing the number by one or two. Since their report is due at our next Annual Conference in June, the Bishop decided not to fill Rev. Summers' position as DS for 8 months, but to instead divide our Winchester District churches among three other DS's.

LUMC and 20 other western Loudoun churches will be superintended by the Rev. Dr. Sarah Calvert, the Arlington DS. In order to lighten the extra load for Rev. Calvert (and the other 2 DSs) several clergy have been asked to serve as "Assistants to the DS". Rev. Lucas at Harmony UMC and I will serve that role for our 21 churches. This is temporary - or it may become permanent in June. In the meantime, we are still considered part of the Winchester District, and the District office staff will continue to fill their roles and responsibilities.

We will miss Rev. Summers and give thanks for his valued and valuable leadership on our Winchester District the past two-plus years.

## Year-End Giving Reminder

Per IRS rules, all charitable giving that is counted for 2020 must either be received by the church by Dec. 31, 2020, or mailed with a postmark no later than Dec 31, 2020. Our last regularly scheduled worship service will be on December 27th this year, but mailed and our online/app/text digital giving will be available through the 31st. Please keep this schedule in mind as you plan your year end giving, and help LUMC finish the year financially strong!



### Salvation Army Angel Tree

Regretfully, we will not be participating in the Salvation Army Angel Tree program this year. We hope to resume our participation next year.



## 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!

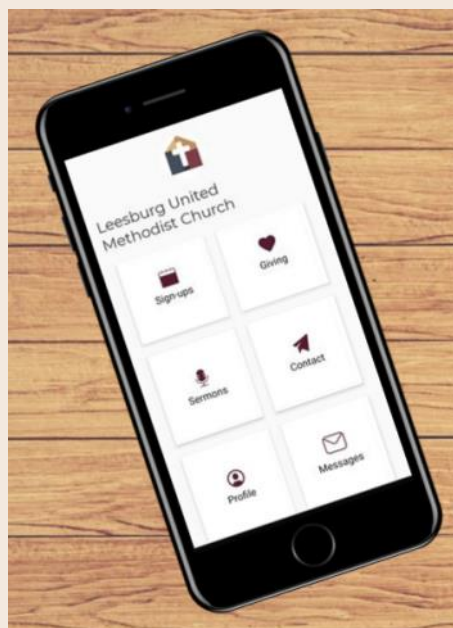
Our new app (available for Android and Apple devices) will help you find event sign-ups, listen to recent sermons, make it easy to give using credit card or direct debit from your bank account, and contact us for general questions or prayer requests.

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 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:

