

# THE MESSENGER

The newsletter of Leesburg United Methodist Church

## February 2021

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## Message from Pastor Jim: Thank You!



**Rev. Jim  
Wishmyer,  
Pastor**

Thank you, LUMC, for living out our membership vows together in 2020 – to support one another – our church – through our prayers, our presence (virtual counts!), our gifts, our service, and our witness. Make sure to check out our year in review.

A new year. A new President and administration. Two new vaccines. New hope of arresting the spread of COVID-19 and its variants. New opportunities to grow our faith as we: begin to read the Immerse Bible; livestream our worship and continue our in-person worship; grow our Neighborhood Groups; engage with our newest Bible Adventure; continue our caring for those within our church and those in need in our community through Backpack Buddies, the Ampersand Project, Loudoun Hunger Relief, and more.

How will you grow as a disciple in 2021? As our Bishop Lewis reminds us, three ways we can grow include:

*(Continued on page 9)*

## Sunday Worship

### Immerse Messiah starts Jan 31

To coincide with our Immerse Bible reading, our Sunday messages will be providing some background detail, while highlighting a section of the week's reading. May you and all be blessed as we read the scriptures together!

**"Your word, O Lord, is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Psalm 119:105)!**

- 1/31 "Immerse Messiah: Seeing Differently" Scripture: Luke 5.25-39  
1st week readings - Luke
- 2/7 "Called to Turn" Scripture: Acts 9.1-19. *Holy Communion*  
2nd week readings - Acts, 1 & 2 Thessalonians
- 2/14 "Compelled to Trust" Scripture: 2 Corinthians 12:1-10  
3rd week readings - Paul's letters to the churches of Corinth, Galatia, Rome
- 2/21 "Training for Life" Scripture: 2 Timothy 3:10-18  
4th week readings - Churches: Rome, Colossae Ephesus, Philippi;  
People: Philemon, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus
- 2/28 "Tested through Trials" Scripture: 1 Peter 1:3-9  
5th week readings - Mark, 1 & 2 Peter, Jude
- 3/7 "Invited to the Table" Scripture: Matthew 26:26-30, *Holy Communion*  
6th week readings - Matthew



**Join the Snow Team**

**We are recruiting people  
for our snow team!**

We need able-bodied people, including high school students ready to get out of the house, who can bring their shovels and work on clearing the sidewalks at church when it snows.

Contact the church office for more info—703-777-2056 or  
[office@leesburgumc.org](mailto:office@leesburgumc.org).

# I M M E R S E: The Bible Reading Experience

We've just begun Immerse: Messiah. Twice each year, for the next three years, we're going to immerse ourselves in the story of the Bible for 8 or 16 weeks at a time. Our first immersion will be by reading the New Testament for the next 8 weeks. The Immerse approach presents the scriptures in a story-book format for youth and adults to read and appreciate. Daily readings will take us through the entire Bible in three years; and our daily readings this season will take us completely through the New Testament, although in a different order from how our Bibles are laid out.

Connect with others for these next 8 weeks by forming or joining a Bible Club to read through "Immerse: Messiah" together. Then meet virtually or in-person each week to discuss what you've read. Invite family and friends, near and far, to read with you (I'm inviting family in other states to connect)! Connect also in worship each Sunday as the message will highlight and illuminate portions of each week's readings.

[You can sign up](#) to be in a Bible club, or host your own Bible club. We'll show you how and provide support along the way.

"Immerse: Messiah" is available on Amazon Kindle or from Tyndale House Publishing in eBook. Softcover is also available on Amazon or Tyndale; or you can get a paperback through Leesburg UMC for \$11. A third option: you can read along in your own bible with the daily Trail Guide that shows the Immerse reading schedule with scripture references. Find [the Trail Guide online here](#).

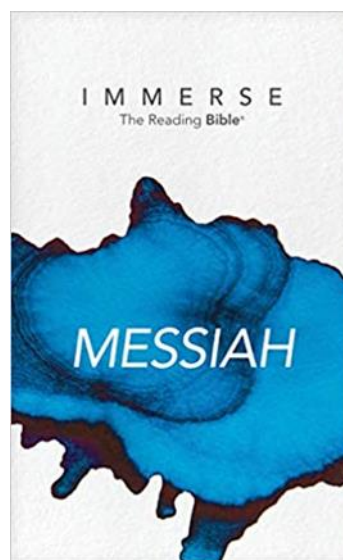
## Bible Clubs:

Sundays, 4 PM, Steve and Celesta Miller

Thursdays, 11 AM, Rev. Jim Wishmyer

Thursdays, 1 PM, Margrit Snyder

Thursdays, 7:15 PM, Sharon and Dave Reith



The  
Worship  
Connection



**Sunday  
Livestream:**

[Click Here  
for Webpage](#)

**Sanctuary  
Worship:**

[Click Here  
to Register](#)

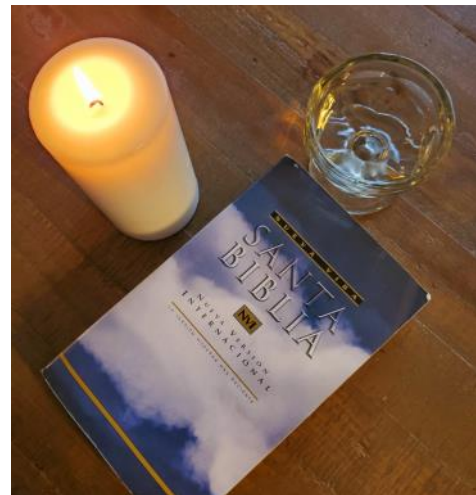


## More Ways to Participate in Immerse during Lent

During our Immerse series and the season of Lent, the Worship Team would like to invite you to contribute to our worship together. We hope that these opportunities will help us stay connected even though we are apart.

- **Share a story about you and your Bible!** It could be a story about your family Bible, the first Bible you received as a kid, a favorite Bible you have used for Bible studies, if you have a Bible that is meaningful to you we want to hear about it. We will be using these stories on our public Facebook and Instagram page for our next series Immerse. We need just one paragraph about the Bible and a photo of you and the Bible. - send [to Rev. Heather](#)
- **What's your favorite Bible verse or story?** [Share online here:](#)
- **Create and share a picture of your worship space.** Create a focal point for your worship with a candle, your Bible, a small bowl of water, and any other symbols that may be meaningful to you in worship. Take a picture of your arrangement to be included in a slideshow at the beginning of our live stream worship. Send to [worship@leesburgumc.org](mailto:worship@leesburgumc.org)

What does *YOUR* worship space look like?



## Wednesday Worship During Lent

**Wednesdays, 7 pm, February 17 through March 24, (Virtual)  
Palm Sunday, 10 am (Livestream) & 11:30 am (In-person)**

As persons made in the image of God, each of us is created precious and holy, loved and valued by God. We have been through – and are still going through - an uncertain and anxious time since our last season of Lent. Like glass vessels, fractured into pieces, our sense of wholeness and normalcy has been shattered. We yearn for healing; we long for recovery. In this Lenten Season, we turn toward God’s healing grace for our physical, communal, mental, intellectual, and environmental health to be restored.

Join us and the team from Worship Design Studio, as each Wednesday evening we explore the healing narratives of Jesus in Matthew 8 and 9. Be reminded that we can begin a journey toward being made whole; while also growing to be more holy. God is making something beautiful and worthwhile in our lives, from that which appears broken, discarded, of little worth. Each week, a different dimension of healing grace.

The image of beach glass, or sea glass, offers us a multifaceted symbol of what Jesus did then – and what God longs to do now.

- 2/17 Ash Wednesday – “Come. Shattered or Whole” – Matthew 11:28-30
- 2/24 Lent 1 “Treasured” – Matthew 8:1-4, 8-16
- 3/3 Lent 2 “Safe Keeping” – Matthew 8:5-13
- 3/10 Lent 3 “Stories” – Matthew 9:27-33
- 3/17 Lent 4 “Pictures” – Matthew 9:18-26
- 3/24 Lent 5 “Restoration” – Matthew 8:18-27

*...from Wednesday to Sunday:*

- 3/28 Palm Sunday “Holy, Wholly, Whole” – Matthew 9:1-8



## 2020 Year in Review Celebration

### MISSIONS



*Rev Heather Wray, Director of Connect Ministries*

#### **Backpack Buddies**

Throughout the pandemic kids were still in need of food. Our congregation continued to pack food for Catoctin Elementary school and donate food to Backpack Buddies. As the pandemic continues please don't forget to support this vitally important ministry to hungry children here in Leesburg.

#### **Loudoun Hunger Relief**

When our neighbors are hungry, Leesburg UMC responds. We made monthly donations to LHR at the beginning of the month. Admission to our Bible Adventures requests folks to bring a non-perishable food item for LHR. During Advent, families in our congregation placed food daily under the Christmas tree to collect food for LHR in our first-ever reverse Advent calendar.

#### **Ampersand Pantry Project**

Through our pandemic fund, which you all graciously donated to throughout the pandemic, we were able to help pay for lunches for hungry neighbors. Congregants from LUMC not only donated time but themselves in service to the Ampersand Pantry Project volunteering to hand out lunches, diapers, and other donations to those who came through in the middle of the day.

#### **Blossom & Bloom Donation Day**

During our stewardship campaign we spent time clearing out the clutter and were able to partner with Blossom and Bloom who graciously accepted our donations. All proceeds from Blossom and Bloom go to help other local area nonprofits that create services and help adults and children with disabilities in our area.

#### **Youth**

While our youth could not go on their typical summer mission trip that did not stop them from serving. Throughout the summer and fall the youth went and served at JK Community Farms. They planted and harvested organic fruits and vegetables for local area food banks. They also spent time helping to maintain and care for our local United Methodist Camp Highroad. While the work they did was hard and needed the youth were able to enjoy each other's company safely and give back to their community.

#### **United Methodist Women**

The United Methodist Women didn't let the pandemic stop them from caring for their neighbors. The ladies of the UMW early in the pandemic brought lunches and snacks to help show their care and support for the healthcare workers at Heritage Hall. They also continued their tradition of giving Christmas gifts to the residents at Birmingham Green and were ready to meet the need when called upon this December.

#### **Homeless Services Center**

Our Neighborhood Groups gave back this December by supplying items for gift bags for 25 male residents at the Loudoun County Homeless Services Center. The gifts included items for cold weather and some sweet treats.

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## CONGREGATIONAL CARE & CONNECTION

### **Welcome Baby!**

Our congregation welcomed two new baby girls into our community this year. You all made meals for the parents to help them in the best way we could during this pandemic. It's hard to be a parent, especially a new parent, always but the pandemic has tested all parents. The small gift of a meal when welcoming a new baby can be such a huge help.

### **Caring for the Sick**

Outside of the pandemic a lot of need arose to care for our congregation members as they underwent treatments and surgery. It was a tricky task to try and care for folks during a pandemic but you all rose to the occasion. You helped pick up groceries for a member after surgery. You fed a family who fell on hard times during the pandemic while a member went through treatment for cancer. You fed another family right as the pandemic started as their child underwent treatment. Since mid-fall many of you stepped up and offered rides to and from treatment for a member. It would have been easy to use the pandemic as an excuse not to engage but you all have not let it get in your way of caring for your fellow members.

### **Neighbors Helping Neighbors**

At the beginning of the pandemic we were unsure what COVID 19 was and all the risks it would carry for our oldest members. You might remember the great fear older individuals felt, and likely still feel, at having to do simple tasks like grocery shopping or picking up medication. With this in mind we created a task force of over 50 individuals ranging in age from 16 to their early 70's of people willing to help others with those tasks. While we did not find as much need for it because our older members are blessed by the care networks they have formed we are thankful for our members who did step up when called upon.

### **Neighborhood Groups**

At the beginning of summer we wanted to find a way for members to stay connected during the pandemic. We grouped our members and regular attendees over 300 households into geographically located groups. From that we now have 10 functioning Neighborhood Groups that help connect over 50 households and individuals to others in our congregation. The Neighborhood Groups were instrumental in being hosts for outdoor communions and our Neighborhood Group leaders check in monthly to pray with our families. As we move into 2021, with a vaccine which offers us much hope, we hope to continue to utilize these groups to gather, grow, and celebrate in their unique locations.

### **Faith Friends – College Student Care Packages**

We have 19 students in colleges from our congregation and as they headed back to school this fall have continued our practice of sending care packages. The students are grateful to receive these packages as they are a reminder of home and of a congregation that loves them. Faith Friends relies on your donations to be able to include useful items within their packages. Thank you for donating to their cause!

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

## WORSHIP

### **Live Streaming Worship**

Transitioned fully to online live streaming in a matter of weeks that has allowed us to worship for almost a full year. Eventually, we began offering two in person services weekly one outside and one in the sanctuary. Our Live stream team or Balcony Buddies, as they are sometimes called, have been the driving force behind getting us up and streaming worship well. All our thanks belong with them.

### **Music**

Our musicians created videos for us to sing our favorite hymns and contemporary songs. They created anthems, Michelle weekly has shared her talent with us in worship, and Raising Praise recorded blocks of songs at a time. Kim and her family shared the music of the bells with us. People mixed and blended voices through video to help us gain a sense of normalcy and togetherness through the pandemic.

### **Outdoor & Virtual Communion**

We held outdoor communion service across Leesburg for members to come share at the Lord's Table. After we received the Bishop's permission we were able to offer communion through our virtual services as well.

### **Creative Worship**

We took many of our worship services outside like our remembrance of the Saints on All Saints, Blue Christmas service, and held outdoor evening worship services weekly from August through October.

### **Easter & Christmas Eve**

We celebrated our high holy days in new but familiar ways. We shared in a sunrise Easter service and regular live streamed Easter service. We held four Christmas Eve services, two pre-recorded and two in person. We also had our traditional children's Christmas Pageant in a new way through the Bible Adventure.

### **Laity Leading**

We have tried to include lay involvement in Sunday morning through sharing testimonies, having them read scripture via video, and inviting participation through chats and sending in prayer requests in real time.



## Children's Sunday School

**Our Children's Sunday School** continues to gather virtually on Sunday mornings for music, Bible Story, crafts, science and prayers.



Special thanks to Margrit Snyder, Heather Gonzalez and Chris Becek for their faithfulness.

## Message from Pastor Jim

*(Continued from page 1)*

**As a life-long learner** (Grow/Connect/Reach) – such as the Immerse Bible experience and Bible clubs, and discipleship groups.

**As an influencer** (Connect/Reach/Grow)– such as showing and sharing our love for neighbor in practical, tangible ways; praying daily for one another, for our church, for our community, for our leaders – church and civic, and more...

**As one who serves** (Reach/Connect/Grow)– such as through ministry within our church fellowship and mission in the world (also “influence”); and by serving God through our worship during Lent.

Within the pages of our newsletter this month, you will find opportunities to grow in all three areas, and to let the light of Christ shine through your life as you grow in your faith. Pray for our church's ministry and mission to “make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world” in 2021!

Grace and peace to all,

Rev. Jim Wishmyer



Angela Becek,  
Director of  
Discipleship  
Ministries

Are you ready to  
escape to a desert  
oasis?

### Bible Adventure: Walking with Jesus



Come and stroll by the Sea of Galilee in January—February and discover the stories of Jesus that have caused people to proclaim him Messiah for two thousand years.

Our current Bible Adventure to take over the AG is Walking with Jesus. The space has been transformed into a desert paradise where you can sit and relax or enjoy some of the activities designed to help reinforce the stories.

A new escape room (optional) will challenge you as you build community with others who pass through.

[Reserve your time slot by clicking here.](#)

**Final Day: February 22**



### Special Thanks to:

Rev. Heather Way

Brad Skillman

Chris, Kyle and Conner  
Pepin

Heather Klein

Janice Webb

Sabrina Becek

Jarrell Jerry

Victoria Becek

Jarrell and Shon Jerry

Ken Eliezer

The Herrmann Family

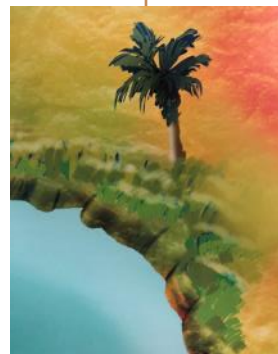


### Health and Safety Precautions

- 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 are placed within, and sinks are available for hand washing.
- Head of Household will affirm adherence with the [Health Acknowledgment](#) poster on behalf of all household members upon entry.



*Victoria and Sabrina playing at the shore while Chris sits back and watches the Bible Project video on the Gospel of Luke.*



*Margrit tries out the raft while Carl looks on.*

*Daniel crossing the Sea of Galilee to get to the sea shore.*



*Charlotte working the lock on the Escape Room.*

*Jarrell fishing on the Sea of Galilee while he listens to the Bible Project video on the Gospel of Mark.*



## Have you checked out our Bible Adventures?

**They're not just for kids.**

*Walking with Jesus* provides background and introductions to the four Gospels from the time of Jesus' baptism through the bulk of his ministry through video presentations.

There are nine stations to go through as you experience the story unfolding over about 90 minutes. All of the activities are optional and are designed to make the Bible Adventures work for all ages and family dynamics.

In March, *Following Jesus* will pick up with the Triumphal Entry and go through Holy Week.

## Backpack Buddies

*“The generous will themselves be blessed, for they share their food with the poor.” Proverbs 22:*

The Backpack Buddies program, in conjunction with the staff and Parent Liaison at the Catoctin Elementary School, has been working hard to distribute bags of food to the families in need this past month. Due to the COVID Pandemic and the fluctuating school schedules, the school is trying new methods to reach as many families as possible to let them know about the LUMC Backpack Buddies program and how they can get the bags of food.

Now more than ever we know there is a great need in our community for assistance, and we are very grateful to the LUMC congregation for their monetary contributions and their help in packing the bags of food for the children. With your continued support we will be able to carry on the work of this mission and assist families in our community.



BACKPACK BUDDIES

### 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.

## 2021 Georgia Bange Scholarship

**Have a graduating high school senior this spring?  
Headed to college or vocational school in the fall?**

The Leesburg United Methodist Women award the Georgia Bange Scholarship each year to a graduating high school senior pursuing college or vocational school.



If you are a member of Leesburg UMC and graduating this spring, please see the scholarship guidelines and application posted in the United Methodist Women section of the Leesburg UMC website: [leesburgumc.org/umwscholarship](https://leesburgumc.org/umwscholarship)

## 2020 Giving Statements

**THANK YOU to everyone for faithfully supporting our operations through the difficulties and changes of 2020.**

2020 giving statements for your tax purposes were emailed (and paper statements mailed to those for whom we have no email address) on January 27. Emailed is from [noreply@e36ochms.com](mailto:noreply@e36ochms.com) or [noreply@leesburgumc.e36ochms.com](mailto:noreply@leesburgumc.e36ochms.com) - be sure to check your junk folder if you haven’t seen the email. Contact [Linda Stoutenburgh](mailto:Linda.Stoutenburgh@leesburgumc.org) if you have any questions about your statement.



## African-American History Month\*

On May 29, 2020, Bishop Sharma Lewis asked the question, “When do we as children of God in the second largest annual conference in The United Methodist connection decide to have the crucial conversations and examine our own experiential and inherited stories of race and racism?” The Race and Race Relations Subgroup of the Bishop’s Cabinet began work to help answer that question.

On the Virginia Conference website, we have the beginning segments of a video curriculum on Racial Reconciliation designed to help us do what Bishop Lewis has asked of us. The developers are looking for small groups who would be willing to meet, view the prepared videos, engage in “crucial conversations,” and in addition to the benefit the group receives, share feedback with the developers to help inform their work.

Please visit this website for more details - [vaumc.org/racerelations/](http://vaumc.org/racerelations/) - and contact Rev. Wishmyer ([Jim@leesburgumc.org](mailto:Jim@leesburgumc.org) – or text 540.429.5504 and include your name) if you would be willing to meet via Zoom as part of an LUMC focus group to view, discuss, and give feedback on the first three videos in the series.



\* read more about African American History Month here: [africanamericanhistorymonth.gov/about/](http://africanamericanhistorymonth.gov/about/)

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

### We Now Have an App!

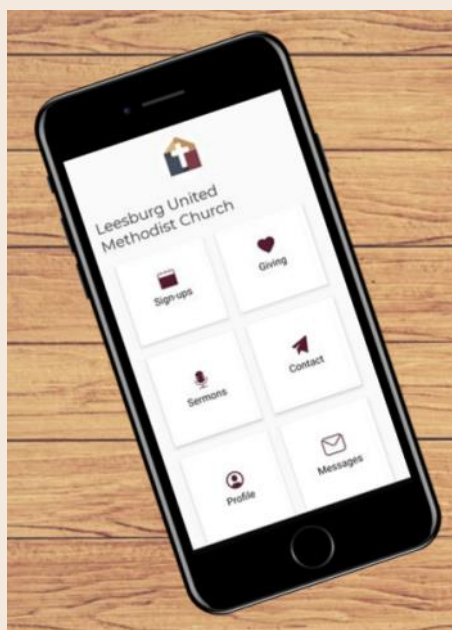
Our new app (available for Android and Apple devices) will help you find event sign-ups, listen to recent sermons, make it easy to give using credit card or direct debit from your bank account, and contact us for general questions or prayer requests.

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:



**Leesburg United Methodist  
Church**

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

## Ash Wednesday

Our season of Lent, beginning with Ash Wednesday, will be different this year. For instance, we are advised not to observe the imposition of ashes for instance. ***We will mark the beginning of the Lenten Season with a virtual worship experience streamed to your home on Ash Wednesday at 7:00 pm, with music, liturgy, scripture, and message.***

In addition, for our Ash Wednesday worship ***we will have worship packets available for pick up at the church office.*** If you aren't able to pick them up, please let us know and we can mail them to you. These packets will include a small amount of ashes from our past-years palm crosses, instructions for the imposition of ashes, and an order of worship.



Then, during the Lenten Season, ***each Wednesday we'll be offering a time of virtual worship***, reflection on, and receiving of God's healing grace for physical health, mental health, community/economic health, environmental health, psychological health, relational health, and more as God invites us to enter a season of recovery and healing from the shattering experiences of this past year. (Read more on [Page 5.](#))

From the gospel of Matthew, we look to the One who "took our infirmities and bore our diseases" (Matthew 8:17b).