

# THE MESSENGER

The newsletter of Leesburg United Methodist Church

## May 2021

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## Message from Pastor Jim: Up in the Air



**Rev. Jim  
Wishmyer,  
Pastor**

“Up in the air.” These words hit home.

14 days. That’s how long the COVID-19 disruption was supposed to last and things would finally settle down. Instead, almost 14 months later, the idiom “up in the air” describes much of our unsettled existence.

“Up in the air” - unsettled, undetermined. This metaphor for unsettled matters floating about like clouds, or perhaps like birds flying in the air, was occasionally put simply as “in the air” until the word “up” was added in the early 1900’s. Thomas Jefferson used this phrase in 1797 (Writings) when he wrote: “I consider the future character of our Republic as in the air.”

When everything (or much of life) seems up in the air, we naturally look around for solid

*(Continued on page 13)*

## Sunday Worship: “Daring to Dance”

The Easter Season (the “Great Fifty Days”) began at sunset Easter Eve and continues to the Day of Pentecost, May 23.

As Easter people, we are called to the dance of resurrection life in all its fullness and joy. We continue to dance together in community the dance of perseverance, caring. We dance together, giving witness to the power of resurrection to change us, set us free, establish justice, love. The resurrection story and our stories point to the joy of living in the beloved community of the church.

The growing community of Christ followers in Acts give us the steps, the Holy Spirit inspires the music, and the risen Christ extends the hand of invitation to and through us – care/dare to dance?

+ + +

- May 2 Persevering Community; “The dance of persevering/enduring...”  
*Acts 5:42 (Holy Communion)*
- May 9 Caring Community; “The dance of caring...” Acts 6:1-7  
*(Mother’s Day)*
- May 16 Witnessing Community; “The dance of witness...”  
*Acts 6:7-15; 7[selected]*
- May 23 Spirit-filled Community; “Dancing in the Spirit!” Acts 2; 10  
*(Pentecost)*
- May 24 Aldersgate Day—7 pm in-person, outdoor worship together with Mt. Zion  
*(Monday)*  
UMC at the Old Stone Church site (Romans 8:16)
- May 30 Trinity Sunday, Ezekiel 37
- June 6 Confirmation Sunday & Graduates Recognition  
*(Holy Communion, Baptism)*

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



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

## Summer Programs: We Need You!

We are beginning to bring back a few of our programs to help us in our mission of making disciples — ***and we need you!***

### Vacation Bible School

**We have two weeks of a modified VBS planned for June 21–25 and June 28–July 2.** We are reducing numbers from what we've had in the past and changing how we do things to be in compliance with Covid protocols.

Currently, we have over 100 kids registered between the two weeks and only a handful are LUMC families. In fact, most list no church affiliation at all. We have a huge opportunity to connect with these families by sharing God's love with them.

Our groups will be walking to and from the field across from the old hospital to give us more outdoor space (kids won't be vaccinated by June), so we'll need extra supervision in the form of crossing guards and walking buddies. We could use a couple of adults who will be present in the field (you can bring a chair).

[Click here to add your name](#) to the list of volunteers.

### Youth Mission

**July 10 - 16, we'll be hosting our own mission trip for our youth.**

Our hope is to create as similar an experience as possible to what we would normally have if we went away. We will gather at LUMC for opening session then disperse into the community for work projects, returning for dinner and evening programming. (We are hopeful that we'll be able to eat meals together by July; probably outside.)

Volunteer roles that we'll need (separate from team chaperones):

Lunch Crew      Snack Crew      Dinner Crew      Fun Stuff Crew

Half Day On-Site (Serve as an extra adult at one of our sites for a half day)

Full Day On-Site (Serve as an extra adult at one of our sites for full day)

[Click here to add your name](#) to the list of volunteers.



## A Whole New World

An update from the Worship Team, Team Leader: [Rebekah Daugherty](mailto:worship@leesburgumc.org)  
(worship@leesburgumc.org)

It's been said that necessity is the mother of invention, and we have certainly experienced the truth of that statement this past year. The nature of the pandemic response also meant we had to adapt quickly. The staff and lay leaders at LUMC, when faced with the necessity of adapting our worship experience to be online, embraced something we had been considering off and on for nearly a decade. And we did it in less than three days! It wasn't perfect but we jumped in, allowing necessity to birth new ways of worshipping together.

Since that first Sunday the Worship Team, Staff, and the newly formed Live Stream Team have been continually experimenting, learning, and adjusting our worship experiences. When software crashed the Live Stream Team spent hours investigating and finding solutions. When we couldn't rehearse and perform music in person our Music Staff learned how to record and mix from home. When we couldn't greet each other in person we made sure we could pass the peace in the chat window and submit prayers via text message. When the weather was nice and restrictions allowed we gathered outdoors to share Communion. Through the seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter (twice), we persevered and we pivoted as we continued to meet new challenges and adapt to changing realities.

As a church we are now looking to the future, wondering what it will bring. We are hopeful that the worst of the pandemic is behind us. We are cautious because of the trauma and loss we have experienced. We are anxious about more uncertainty ahead. As our church and our world emerges from this pandemic, one thing is certain: we are changed and there is no going back.

The past year may have temporarily closed our building and restricted our ability to gather there but it has also thrown open the doors to a whole new world of ministry for our church. If we weren't living in an online world before the pandemic, we most certainly are now. Schools, work places, and businesses have all adapted to restrictions by leveraging online platforms and most are looking to incorporate those new technologies and methods into their operations long term. Likewise, our church has adapted and will now benefit from building on what we have learned and seizing the opportunity to explore new possibilities.

The Worship Team is looking ahead with optimism as we transition out of pandemic restrictions. We are planning to develop both our on-site and our online worship to maximize the impact and reach of our worship ministries. The Team sees both of these platforms as valuable and vital to our church's ministry. There is much work to be done as we envision what our worship experiences will look like moving forward. We are working on the logistics for both on-site and online worship, and we are committing to extra meetings to work out both the big picture and the details.

As the Worship Team plans the next steps for our worship together we welcome your prayerful support, creative ideas and feedback. We continue to focus on our Team purpose "to create meaningful and memorable worship that connects our congregation to God and to one another." We are excited for the opportunities that lay before us and look forward to what the future holds.



## Share Your Thoughts on Worship and Ministry

We are continuing and already beginning some of our in-person ministries again. At the same time, we are excited to pray and plan for restarting ministries and beginning anew this fall, as we come forward to church. With more of our members receiving their vaccines, we are seeing more of our members at in-person worship on Sundays, and greater participation in other ministry activities.

In order to stay as safe as possible, we continue to follow the recommendations of the CDC and the direction we have received from the Virginia Annual Conference as we make our plans. Unlike other churches, we have not had any persons contract COVID as a result of church activities. This is a tribute to our staff, volunteers, and each of our members who have taken seriously the safety protocols and the responsibility we each have to keep one another safe. Please see our [COVID-19 guidelines here](#).

***Now, please share your thoughts that we may better plan our worship and other ministry activities. Thank you!***

How have you participated in worship during the past six-seven months (since Sunday in-person worship resumed on September 20)?

- Online/virtual Only  
 In-person mostly  
 Online/virtual mostly, with in-person for special worship services such as:  
 Christmas Eve       Holy Week       Easter  
 I have not been worshipping with LUMC during the past six-seven months

As we plan more in-person worship opportunities, which are you likely to participate in?

- Outdoor worship (monthly, beginning in May)  
 Current 11 am Sunday indoor worship  
 Sunday indoor worship at another time (\_\_\_\_ am/pm)  
 I am still unsure about participating in in-person worship

What aspects of worship have been the most meaningful during the past year?

Online/virtual:

In-person:

What do you miss most from worship prior to the pandemic?

What are you hoping for, looking forward to, with respect to worship this Fall, 2021?

When, and under what conditions, do you anticipate being ready to participate in indoor, in-person worship in our sanctuary?

Your age:  Under 18     18-26     27-34     35-44  
 45-54     55-64     65-74     75+

Have you been vaccinated for COVID-19?       Yes       No

Name (required) \_\_\_\_\_

Best contact (email or phone) \_\_\_\_\_

**Please  
respond no  
later than  
Monday,  
May 10th**

**Here's How:**

**MAIL a  
printed form**

**OR**

**Use [THIS LINK](#)**

**OR**

**Text  
FEEDBACK to  
703-440-7222**





## Monthly Meals for Homeless Services Center

For the past few months the Missions Committee has been providing dinner to the Loudoun Homeless Services Center. We would like to continue to provide this service and need your help!

We would like to commit to providing dinner for 30 people on the first Friday of each month. Dinners may be bought, homemade, or a combination. LHSC's only request is that the dinner be delivered by 5:30 pm. You or your group will be fully reimbursed. Thank you! [Vicky Weaver](#) and [Natalie Hartmann](#).

**[Use this link to sign up for a meal.](#)**

## Backpack Buddies

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

The LUMC Backpack Buddies Missions program would like to sincerely thank the congregation of LUMC for its continued love and support for this mission throughout the year.

We will continue to make deliveries of food to Catoctin Elementary throughout the month of May and thru the week of June 7th. We look forward to resuming the Backpack Buddies Mission in the coming school year. Thank you again for making it possible for us to continue with this mission.



BACKPACK BUDDIES



## Graduate Recognition

Are you (or is someone you know and love) graduating from high school, college, or graduate school this year? Please let us know, so we can recognize them. Please send their name, school graduating from, and plans for the future by May 23 to the [church office](#)

## Message from Rev. Heather: Maternity Leave

Dear Church,

This month Daniel and I will be welcoming our baby boy into our family on May 19th. We are excited and nervous to transition from a family of three to a family of four. My last Sunday before maternity leave will be May 16th. Since I am a clergy person the guidelines for my maternity leave are set by the United Methodist Church Book of Discipline which allows for a minimum of eight weeks of leave. I am grateful that the church understands the importance of taking time away from church duties to attend to the bond and new rhythm of life that will be built at home. I will be taking all eight weeks of maternity leave to get to know our son and help our daughter transition into her role as an older sister. While I am away my amazing colleagues and the laity that work closely with me will attend to my different roles within our church.

As I head into leave I ask that you please be in prayer for us as we welcome our son, who is a gift from God, into our family. Pray for our daughter Nora that she might flourish in this transition and that in her times where she struggles with the transition to a family of four she might always know our deep love for her. Pray for Leesburg UMC and Round Hill UMC that those folks filling in for Daniel and I as we spend time on leave would continue to help lead our congregations to be the hands and feet of Christ in our absence. Pray for me, that my birth would be uneventful, that my recovery would be smooth, and that I would heal well.

Thank you for all the ways you have supported us already. From covering us in prayer, to loving and thoughtful gifts for both the baby and Nora, and for your excitement in welcoming him into the life of our congregation. When he is here I promise to share and let you all see him. We are excited to watch him grow in and be nourished by both Round Hill UMC and Leesburg UMC just as our daughter Nora has grown among you. Thank you for being our family in Christ.

With love and gratitude,  
Rev. Heather Wray, Rev. Daniel Wray and Nora



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

## LUMC Days at JK Community Farm

**May 15 and/or June 19, 9 - 10:30 am or 10:30 - Noon**

**35516 Paxson Rd, Purcellville**

[Click here to RSVP](#)

What to Bring - *(please do not plan to share or borrow any items)*

- Sun hat
- Sturdy shoes (no open toes)
- Sunscreen
- Water
- Gardening or Rubber Gloves
- Face Coverings





## Bible Adventure: A Most Excellent Adventure of Transforming the World

**We have reached the final leg of our Bible Adventures Journey!**

Our next Bible Adventure to take over the AG will be *A Most Excellent Adventure of Transforming the World*.

We will travel through time as we discover how the Church has evolved from Pentecost, through persecution, into the Middle Ages and the Reformation. We will follow the path of change that brings us to our place in the story and glimpse ahead to what the future might hold.



[Click on this link to reserve your slot.](#) Available April 17 through May 24



### 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.



### Scenes from the latest Bible Adventure:

*The Beceks find their way.*

*The Snyders complete the Escape room—can you beat this time?*





## A Message from Angela: Discipleship

**Thank you to all who supported the Bible Adventures over this past year!**

Thank you to those who took on acting roles, thank you to those who came and tried a new way of experiencing the biblical narrative, thank you to those who continued to give to the ministries & mission of LUMC that funded this ministry, thank you to those who prayed for LUMC and ministries & mission during this difficult season and offered encouragement to staff and leadership.

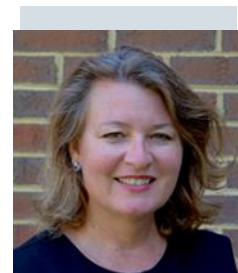
**How do we make disciples in a pandemic?** That was the question these Bible Adventures sought to answer. Discipleship is the process of becoming more like Jesus. That's our mission and purpose (and my job, in particular) – to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

In order to grow as disciples of Jesus, our ideas and beliefs of who Jesus is and what it means to be his followers must be challenged on a regular basis. As we get to know Jesus better, we continually unlearn ideas and develop new beliefs. This is part of the transformational process of discipleship. It is through the spiritual discipline of communal Bible study that the Holy Spirit works within us as we wrestle with God and the ideas we were taught previously.

Too often, people walk away from the church once they realize that what they were taught was wrong. We do teach some wrong ideas, but more often, we teach incomplete ideas. We expect the church to provide answers to our questions, but to grow as a disciple, we do not need answers to questions, we need our answers to be questioned. When we seek finite answers, they will always be incomplete and will often lead to wrong conclusions.

Discipleship is not an intellectual exercise, nor is it a matter of following a formula or doing good works. There is no point of mastery. You will never be done; Jesus will always ask you go further, one more mile.

It is my hope and prayer that all who participate in the Bible Adventures this year, were provoked into rethinking some of your ideas of what it means to follow Jesus. **What is your post-pandemic discipleship plan? How can I provoke you to rethink what it means for you to live as a follower of Jesus?**



*Angela Becek,  
Director of  
Discipleship  
Ministries*

### **VBS 2021: Discover God's Love on Adventure Island!**

There's still room for your child to join in the VBS fun June 28 – July 2 from 9 am to noon! From a whimsical lighthouse on an enchanted island, Explorers are guided by a Lighthouse Keeper and Beacon the Puffin on an exciting quest to find five mysterious Infinity Lanterns to help light their way. Using map coordinates from the Reference Book (the Bible), children discover clues to finding each Lantern while learning how God's light shines in the lives of familiar biblical characters in Old and New Testament stories. [Register here.](#)



## CLT Corner: Highlights from your Church Leadership Team

This Month: CLT; SPRC; Finance

### May Town Hall *(from Dave Reith, CLT Chair)*

**LUMC—1, Pandemic—0: We've been challenged, we've adapted, and LUMC is succeeding!**

Please keep an eye out for further communications from our Church Leadership Team (CLT) about an upcoming LUMC Town Hall, at a yet to be determined date in May. Our church leadership would like us to come together to celebrate LUMC after more than a year of this pandemic. Join us in a dialogue as we share together our challenges, our sorrows, and most importantly our joys and our successes! We have accomplished much in this past year and we want to share an update on where we have been, where we are, and where we might be going. We plan to host the Town Hall in person, for those that are comfortable attending, as well as virtually for those that cannot join in person at this time. This is just one more way we are adapting as a church and as a congregation. We look forward to seeing you then!



### SPRC Notes *(from Bobbi Cunningham, SPRC Chair and Rev. Jim Wishmyer)*

#### **Staffing Change**

Katrina Broglio will be resigning her position as Director of Traditional Music effective May 23rd and has resigned her administrative assistant position as of April 8th. She has been accepted to the master's program in speech therapy at UVA, which begins in August. This is a program that requires students to be in residence in Charlottesville.

We have been blessed to have Katrina on staff with LUMC, since August 20, 2017, and we will miss her music gifts and leadership, her constant encouragement, and her positive outlook! Congratulations Katrina, and we wish you the best in your new endeavor! We will certainly miss you and thank you for all you have done.

Our Staff-Parish Relations Committee and our Worship Team are working together to determine our next step. In the meantime, we are confident that our current music staff, choir, and members of our music ministry will continue working together to provide excellence and inspiration in all our music!

#### **Maternity Leave**

As many already know, the Rev. Heather Wray and her husband, the Rev. Daniel Wray, are expecting their second child in just a few weeks. *(See separate message from Rev. Heather on page 7)* We are excited for their family!

Rev. Wray will thus be on maternity leave for eight weeks, starting May 19. Please join us in congratulating her family on their blessed new addition, and lifting your prayers for a healthy baby and a speedy recovery for Mom!

## Finance Update *(from Dennis Wise, Finance Chair)*

Our year to date giving has been lower than our projections but our expenses have also been lower than expected. These factors have allowed us to achieve year to date income equal to our actual expenses. Additionally we continue to pay down the mortgage at a much faster pace than anticipated due to the generous giving of our congregation. See table below.

FINANCE SUMMARY: 3/31/2021	Monthly				Annual			
	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Actual</i>	<i>\$ Delta</i>	<i>% Delta</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Actual</i>	<i>\$ Delta</i>	<i>% Delta</i>
<b>Operations</b>								
Giving Income (Non Designated)	57,318.00	60,016.14	2,698.14	4.7%	168,157.00	153,980.66	(14,176.34)	-8.4%
Rental Income	4,589.17	4,589.17	0.00		13,767.00	13,767.51	0.51	
Total Income	61,907.17	64,605.31	2,698.14		181,924.00	167,748.17	(14,175.83)	
Expenses	63,851.01	52,815.87	(11,035.14)	-17.3%	191,552.90	166,894.97	(24,657.93)	-12.9%
Increase/Decrease to Reserves	(1,943.84)	11,789.44			(9,628.90)	853.20		
<b>Mortgage</b>								
Designated Giving	13,568.00	10,028.16	(3,539.84)		28,816.00	29,276.32	460.32	
Payment	8,000.00	13,673.16	5,673.16		24,000.00	29,673.16	5,673.16	
<i>Interest</i>	0.00	260.91			0.00	902.04		
<i>Principal</i>	8,000.00	13,412.25			24,000.00	28,771.12		
Loan Balance (Est.)		78,374.10						
Estimated Pay off date		January 2022						

## Third Breakthrough Prayer

In the midst of this pandemic, with news of natural disasters affecting so many, and personal losses affecting us all, we've turned to the Immerse Messiah volume of the Bible for a new Breakthrough Prayer. On the inside of the front cover, the first page contains this prayer which our CLT approved as recommended by our Outreach/Evangelism Team:

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, grant we pray  
that we might be grounded and settled in your truth  
by the coming of your Holy Spirit into our hearts.  
What we do not know, reveal to us;  
What is lacking within us, make complete;  
That which we do know, confirm in us; and  
Keep us blameless in your service,  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



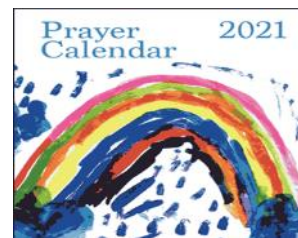
As with our previous Breakthrough Prayers, we commend this one to all in our church family for prayer at 7:14 in the morning, and/or 7:14 in the evening (see 2 Chronicles 7:14). Also, we encourage all of our ministry and administrative teams/committees, small groups, etc., to begin or end their meetings with this prayer.

## LUMW: Be Together While Apart

The Covid-19 pandemic challenges our faith community to find ways of being together while apart. One way we can be together and keep up with the crucial work of missionaries and mission institutions is our UMW website and social media connections.

Visit the United Methodist Women website at [unitedmethodistwomen.org](https://unitedmethodistwomen.org) for news, events and inspiration.

Follow the United Methodist Women's Prayer Calendar and find out all it has to offer on Facebook at [facebook.com/umwprayercalendar](https://facebook.com/umwprayercalendar)



Learn about National Mission Institutions at [unitedmethodistwomen.org/nmi](https://unitedmethodistwomen.org/nmi)

Watch United Methodist women videos at [youtube.com/user/umwomen](https://youtube.com/user/umwomen)

Keep up with daily mission focuses at [twitter.com/umwomen](https://twitter.com/umwomen)

View thousands of inspiring photos on Instagram at [Instagram.com/umwomen](https://Instagram.com/umwomen)

Read what other members are reading. Visit the church library or choose UMW selections [unitedmethodistwomen.org/readingprogramcatalog2021](https://unitedmethodistwomen.org/readingprogramcatalog2021)

Listen to Faith Talks, a United Methodist Women Podcast, available at [unitedmethodistwomen.org/faithtalks](https://unitedmethodistwomen.org/faithtalks) These are conversations with United Methodist Women exploring themes that empower us to put faith, hope and love into action.



## LUMC Stories

There's a book in the Church Library that has a unique relationship to our church. The book is The Bible Story (1971) by the best-selling author Pearl S. Buck. The book in our library is not widely read today but the author was quite well known.

Pearl S. Buck was a daughter of missionaries to China early in the 20th century. As an adult, Pearl authored hundreds of fiction and non-fiction books, short stories, and collections. She was awarded a Pulitzer Prize in 1932 and a Nobel Prize in 1938.

The middle initial "S" in her name stands for Sydenstricker. Yes, the Sydenstricker of the Methodist church of the same name close to Springfield, VA. And, yes, the Hubert Sydenstricker who was Pearl's uncle who pastored Leesburg church from 1915 – 1919.



## Message from Pastor Jim

*(Continued from page 1)*

ground, for anchors, for something stable.

What in your life captures and demonstrates the essence of this phrase and feeling? What has been most unsettling for you and for your family? Where, and how, have you felt the disconnection(s) brought on by COVID-19? School? Home? Work? Decisions about your future?

For my wife and I, getting our home ready to sell\* fits the bill. Much of our lives unsettled before because of COVID-19, the unknowns of preparing to sell our home settled us squarely in the land of unsettled for the past few months.

So what about you?

In his book, **A Time to Heal**, J. R. Briggs writes about the importance of listening to, and telling, our stories. “Stories have healing power because stories connect us.” As we search for solid ground, know that you are not alone. I am not alone. We are not alone. We have a community that cares. That prays. That listens. That shares. In our unsettledness, it was, and is, the encouragement of those who have listened, who have shared, and who have prayed, that has enabled us to feel solid ground beneath our feet

While the Easter Season reminds us of the meta-narrative of the resurrection and all the reasons we have to dance, our individual narratives may make it difficult for us some days, or even most days, to feel like dancing. Therein lies the blessing of community. Of connection. Of caring and sharing. Inviting one another to the dance floor of grace.

Feeling like some, much, or all of life is “up in the air”? May the promises of scripture and the presence of Christ through one another in community help provide firm footing as we walk through these days.

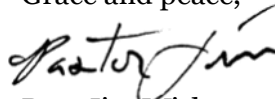
“There is no one like the God of Israel. He rides across the heavens to help you, across the skies in majestic splendor. The eternal God is your refuge, and his everlasting arms are under you. He drives out the enemy before you... So Israel will live in safety, prosperous Jacob in security, in a land of grain and new wine, while the heavens drop down dew. (Deuteronomy 33:26-28 NLT)

The Lord is my light and my salvation, so why should I be afraid? The Lord is my fortress – the stronghold of my life – protecting me from danger, so why should I tremble? (Psalm 27:1 NLT)

“For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you.’” (Jeremiah 29:11-12)

Keep dancing (and singing!) – even in the rain!

Grace and peace,



Rev. Jim Wishmyer

-----  
 (\* For those who may naturally be wondering, we are moving our home address, not my work address.)

**Leesburg United Methodist  
Church**

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Leesburg, VA 20176

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www.leesburgumc.org



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

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

### We Now Have an App!

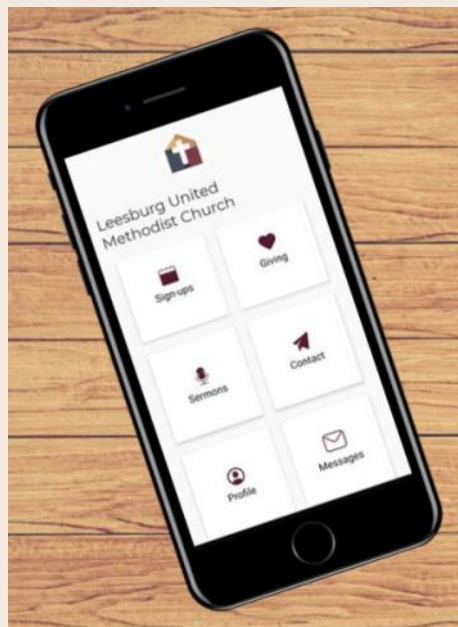
Our new app (available for Android and Apple devices) will help you find event sign-ups, listen to recent sermons, make it easy to give using credit card or direct debit from your bank account, and contact us for general questions or prayer requests.

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

### Text to Give

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

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



Apple:



Android:

