



The Messenger

The newsletter of
Leesburg United
Methodist Church

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From Pastor Jim: Aha! 2019

January 1. New Year's! 2019. New choices. Resolutions. Change. There's nothing magical or mystical about a new year – or is there? Perhaps it is conditioning, perhaps it is culture, or perhaps it is faith that prompts us each year to consider areas of our lives where we need and/or want change. Here's one top ten list of changes people resolve to make:

1. Spend more time with family & friends
2. Fit in fitness
3. Tame the bulge
4. Quit smoking
5. Enjoy life more
6. Quit drinking
7. Get out of debt
8. Learn something new
9. Help others
10. Get organized *(list from tripsavvy.com)*

When it comes to resolutions, forget the past. Moving forward, what will help you experience lasting, positive, growth and change? Since this is a church newsletter, let's think in terms of following Christ, or your discipleship. And, suppose, instead of focusing on what we can do to change ourselves to be more faithful, more Christlike, etc.; that we focus elsewhere? Suppose we seek God and encounter God in ways that allow God to change us? Instead of "self help", we ask for God's help. This doesn't mean that it's all on God. Rather, we invite God to do what we cannot do on our own.

When it comes to spiritual growth and change, consider the Who, What, How, and Why. Let's ask God to reveal the what. Let's trust God to

help with the how. You are the who. And the why? One why that hit me recently comes from Essentialism: The Disciplined Pursuit of Less, by Greg McEown, which several of our church leaders are reading because of Next Level Innovations. In chapter 8, McEown leads off with the phrase, "Protect the Asset." It could also be a command. We get one chance at this life. No re-runs, re-takes, do-overs, or second chances. Your best asset to see you through this life is you: your self, your soul, your mind, your body. Protect it. Nurture it. Care for it. Do those things, if you want to be your best self and live your best life moving forward (we cannot do a single thing to change the past, so let it go). Here's my why and it can be your why if you like, or pick another.

A great time to begin change is the season after Epiphany, which begins January 6th and takes us to Lent. It is the season of the revealing, manifesting, disclosing, and illuminating of Christ as his earthly ministry begins. And it is about our awakening to Christ's presence in our lives and in our world; Christ who comes to make a difference, who comes to change us and shape us in God's image.

One way of describing an Epiphany is as an "Aha!" experience. Borrowing from Craig Groeschel's book, Aha!, I invite you to join me in making "Aha!" an acronym for your spiritual growth and change starting off the new year: Awaken to the possibilities God has for you; whatever change God wants to work in you. Be Honest with God, with yourself, and with others

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Connect

January Worship: "Aha!"

Join us January 6th as we celebrate the arrival of the Magi on the Day of Epiphany and begin a new series: "Aha!"



Rev.
Jim Wishmyer,
Pastor

What is Epiphany? It is the grand "Aha!" of the cosmos; the manifestation of the Eternal, Omniscient, Omnipresent, and Omnipotent God of the universe who walks on the wings of the wind and spoke Creation into being, finally stepping into creation with a bang. Actually, it was a cry. A newborn baby's cry. In a borrowed delivery room, in a strange town, surrounded not by admiring adorers but by farm animals (we suppose). Did the animals know what was happening? No. Did the child's parents realize who he was? Not completely. As our storyteller, Matthew, begins his amazing tale we listen in with the invitation to look with wonder on this life that would bring Life to all. Matthew invites us to open our souls to the "Aha!" he prays for as he tells the good-news tale of Jesus.

- Jan 6:** "Aha!" – Matthew 2:1-23 – Rev. Jim Wishmyer
Epiphany Sunday; Holy Communion; 2019 Leader Consecration
- Jan 13** Matthew 3:1-17 – Rev. Heather Wray
Baptism of our Lord; Preschool Sunday (9:45)
- Jan 20** Matthew 4: 1-17 – Walter Tennyson (Co-Lay Leader)
Human Relations Sunday
- Jan 27** Matthew 5:1-20 – Rev. David Graves

"Aha! 2019" (continued)

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about your need for spiritual growth and transformation (Calls for another "H" – Humility. The proud see no need to change.). Take Action to introduce and implement change; and begin small.

Drawing from Groeschel's book, scripture, and a variety of sources, I will be sending out a nightly email encourager for your morning read, beginning the evening of January 6th (Epiphany!). This is not intended to replace your devotional, the Trail Guide, etc.; but will be a short scripture, prayer reminder, and encouraging thought or question for the day relating to: Awakening to God's presence/work in you; being Honest with God, self,

others about change; and/or taking necessary Action to implement change. We'll also be able to share and read our individual "AHA's!" along the way. To sign up, send an email to jim@leesburgumc.org or to lumc.aha.2019@gmail.com ; send a text to 540-429-5504; or contact the church office.

Here's to hoping, praying, and implementing real change in our lives in order to live our best lives as faithful disciples who are becoming **"Followers of Christ-One with God and with each other-Ministers to all the world."**

Grace, peace, and positive growth in 2019,

Rev. Jim Wishmyer

Hopeful Deacon's Corner

This fall I have been working on completing my requirements for full membership in the United Methodist Church. Full membership means ordination in the UMC. You all have been so supportive of me in this process, and I want to give you a peak into all that I accomplished this fall.

One of the requirements was writing three papers on the following topics: Theology; Vocation and Leadership; and Practice of Ministry. I was also required to create a video to show how I practice ministry, so I recorded myself preaching a required sermon, and I recorded myself teaching and leading for the video. I was also required to create and lead a Bible study on the book of Ruth from scratch. I enjoyed leading that class with the women of Leesburg UMC this Fall. In total I wrote over 100 pages to meet requirements. It was a lot of work, but I truly could not have done without the support of this church.

Thank you to everyone who sent cards, said a prayer for me, gave me flowers to brighten my study areas, asked me on Sunday mornings how it was going, rejoiced with me when it was done, sent encouraging texts, made me cookies, colored pictures to encourage me, and I could go on and on. I am beyond thankful for this community and the way they supported me through this part of the process. I am so lucky to serve this church.

The next step is to be interviewed by the Board of Ordained Ministry, which is made up of ministers and lay persons in the Virginia Conference who will have read and reviewed all my papers (and many others). The interview will be in Richmond on Monday morning, January 28th. I will go to three separate interview committees: Theology, Vocation and Leadership, and Practice of Ministry. I will discuss with them my papers, how I have grown over the past four years of ministry, and how I see God at work in my ministry. Following those interviews they will let me know if I will be ordained this June or if I need to come back again next year. Either result is truly a possibility, and I look forward to your support no matter the outcome.

The biggest gift I have received in writing these papers is the church's love and support through this process. Please continue to hold me in prayer as I prepare for my interviews later this month. Thank you, LUMC, for all your love and support.



*Rev Heather Wray,
Director of
Connect Ministries*

Want to Join the Band?

Play acoustic, electric or bass guitar?
Keys? Drums? Vocals? Something else?

Raising Praise is always looking for new members and to broaden our style and the depth of our repertoire.

Join us as we help create meaningful worship through music at LUMC.

There is a spot for you.

Contact: csheltonvt99@gmail.com

Scout Sunday: Feb 10th

Any and all members of scouts: Boy Scouts of America, Cub Scouts, and Girl Scouts USA, are invited to participate in worship on February 10th. Adult and youth members should attend in uniform and will be recognized during the services.

Please contact worship@leesburgumc.org if you are a scout and would like to serve as usher, greeter, or reader.



Connect

What is Stephen Ministry?

Our congregation's Stephen Ministry equips lay people to provide confidential, one-to-one Christian care to individuals in our congregation and community who are experiencing difficulties in their lives.

A Stephen Minister is...

- A child of God who walks beside a person who is hurting.
- A congregation member with gifts for caregiving, who was carefully selected to serve in this role.
- A lay person who has received 50 hours of training in providing emotional and spiritual care.
- Someone who will be there for his or her care receiver, meeting faithfully for about an hour each week, for as long as there's need.



"Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." Galatians 6:2

Stephen Ministry is YOUR Ministry! You play an important role in our Stephen Ministry.

Here's what you can do:

- Pray for God to bring hope and healing to hurting people through Stephen Ministry.
- Accept care from a Stephen Minister during your time of need. God doesn't expect you to bear your burdens alone.
- Tell a friend, neighbor, coworker or relative who is hurting about Stephen Ministry.
- If you are a good listener and a compassionate person, prayerfully consider becoming a Stephen Minister.

"Therefore encourage one another and build up each other." 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Stephen Leaders are trained leaders in our congregation who oversee and direct Stephen Ministry.

Talk with a Stephen Leader today if:

- You or someone you know could benefit from the care of a Stephen Minister.
- You are interested in possibly becoming a Stephen Minister.
- You have any other questions about Stephen Ministry.

Contact: Rev. Heather Wray, Wayne Reynolds, or Lou Legard,



Play & Learn

Resumes January 8th

Parents and their little ones (infants through 5 years) are invited to be a part of the highly energetic Play and Learn Group. Any family is welcome to attend, so feel free to bring a friend. We meet on Tuesdays, 9:15– 10:30 am in Asbury Hall. The group's purpose is to create a space where both children and adults can encourage one another, learn, grow, and build friendships, .

If you have any questions please email, Rev. Wray at heather.wray@leesburgumc.org



Connect

Conversations that Connect #2: January 13th

5:00-6:30 PM – includes supper, childcare provided

(Also Tuesday Jan 15th at 7 pm for those who cannot attend on Sunday)



In preparation for what may come out of the called General Conference in February (see article on Called General Conference), we are coming together for the second of several “Conversations that Connect.” These are an attempt to bring us (LUMC) together in conversation to:

- 1) Become informed about the called General Conference in February: what it is, who it involves, recommendations being presented, and what this means for local United Methodists and United Methodist churches.
- 2) Examine the ways scripture, faith, tradition, reason, experience, and culture shape our beliefs, with particular attention to how we read, interpret, and apply scripture. We’ll look at a variety of biblical texts.
- 3) Listen to and learn from one another with regard to each other’s beliefs, experiences, thoughts, and questions regarding LGBTQ+ issues. We recognize that people with deep faith, compassion, and respect for scripture and church tradition have divergent views. Have we faith, mutual respect, humility, and love enough to converse with those with whom disagree?
- 4) Pray for the work of the called General Conference.

The topics above were prompted by questions that arose at our first “Conversations...”:

- What role does the local church have in all of this?
- How does scripture inform our understanding of sexuality from all sides?
- What effect will the decision of the General Conference have on the local church?
- How can we be more welcoming of those who are LGBTQ+ ?

“Conversations that Connect” will again include pizza and pot-luck. If you are coming for dinner, please bring a dish or dessert to share. For those who do not want dinner, feel free to come and participate in the conversations anyway!

Please sign up ahead of time online, or by contacting the church office (703-777-2056) so we can plan accordingly for food, tables and chairs, childcare, photocopies, etc. If you have a question that relates to our conversation, please email it to me (jim@leesburgumc.org) or to Terry Kingsley (studioart4u@gmail.com) by Friday, January 11.

Community Office Hours

Wednesdays from 9:00 am—12:30 pm . Resumes January 9th

Stop by the Starbucks off of Edwards Ferry Road in Leesburg on Wednesdays from 9:00—12:30 for Rev. Heather’s Community Office Hours. She would love to pray with you, lend a listening ear, and share some coffee. Keep an eye on our Facebook page for updates or changes to the coffee hours: www.facebook.com/LeesburgUMC/



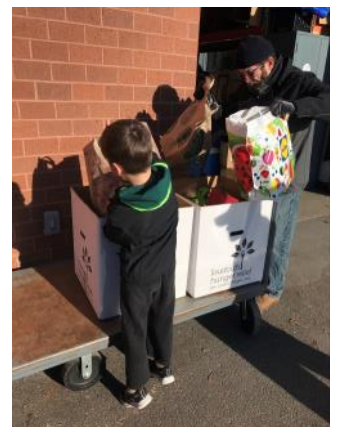
Connect

See How We've Been Connecting with Each Other at LUMC

Appreciation Brunch for Retiring Leaders November 18



Gather Group Cookie Decorating Party & Bag Packing Event for Loudoun Hunger Relief



Connect with our Youth through Fundraisers

Support our Youth and the Youth Summer Mission Trip by supporting their fundraisers.

Super Bowl Sub Sale: Pre-order subs or order in person in Asbury Hall. All proceeds help to offset the \$400 cost of the trip.

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper: The Pancake Supper is on Shrove Tuesday, March 5th. Open seating is available in Asbury Hall from 5–7 pm with a buffet of pancakes, sausage, eggs and fruit.



Connecting at the Advent Prayer Breakfast

The Advent Prayer Breakfast was in Asbury Hall on December 1st, with over 60 attendees. We enjoyed an inspirational Advent Message from Reverend Daniel Wray, and beautiful music from Heather Wray, Katrina Weirup, and Michelle Pickney. Christmas gifts the LUMW members purchased for the 35 residents of Birmingham Green nursing home and assisted living were displayed as a celebration of our yearly support to former Loudoun County residents without families.



Grow

Classes & Workshops

Adult Discipleship: One Time Classes & Workshops

Tuesday, January 15, 7 pm—8:30 pm

Sunday School & Small Group Leader Training

Tuesday, January 29, 7 pm—8 pm

Matthew: Following the Narrative

Tuesday, February 12, 6:30—9:30 pm

Sharing Your Faith



Choose from the options at registration

(<https://leesburgumc.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/188715>)

Bishop's Bible Reading Challenge for 2019

Join our Virginia Conference Bishop Sharma Lewis in her annual Bible Reading Challenge. This year will be a mixture of Old Testament and New Testament readings each day.



Bishop Lewis' tips on getting the most out of your bible reading:

- Start reading the Bible today.
- Set aside a specific time and place each day. Set your schedule and then stick to it. Mornings are great; but feel free to use any time that works consistently with your schedule.
- Get a good study Bible to help to illuminate the meaning of the original Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek text.
- Choose a translation to use during your reading.
- Say a short prayer to God before you begin, asking the Holy Spirit to give you wisdom and understanding.
- Dive in and enjoy the richness of God's Word! Apply God's Word to your life. Bible study should be practical and applicable. I assure you that these seven steps will help you begin a journey in becoming a lifelong learner of God's Word.

Use this link to find the Bishop's Bible Reading Challenge page, which includes links to each month's readings: <https://vaumc.org/pages/bishop-lewis/2019biblechallenge>.

Keeping Up with the Congregation

New Members

We've had no new members in the last month. Watch the Weekly Info for information on upcoming membership class opportunities.

Condolences

... to the family and friends of Jewell Emswiller, who passed away on December 30th.

January Birthdays

The January birthday will be available on the Just Ask desk



Grow

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Angela Becek,
Director of
Discipleship
Ministries

Adult Small Groups

Matthew (Sundays at 6 pm in Wesley Hall)

Journey inside the pages of Scripture to meet a personal God who enters individual lives and begins a creative work from the inside out. Shaped with the individual in mind, Immersion encourages simultaneous engagement both with the Word of God and with the God of the Word to become a new creation in Christ. Immersion, inspired by a fresh translation - the Common English Bible - stands firmly on Scripture and helps readers explore the emotional, spiritual, and intellectual needs of their personal faith. More importantly, they'll be able to discover God's revelation through readings and reflections. The book is \$9, payable through the online registration.

Click-Here
TO **REGISTER**

<https://leesburgumc.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/188649>

Philippians (Thursdays at 9:30 am in Wesley Hall)

The Letter of Philippians talks about how grateful Paul is for their support and encourages them to have joy as Christians regardless of their circumstances. When you read these words think about this: Paul is chained to a Roman soldier, and his letter to the church in Philippi is to remind them of the goodness of a faithful God." The book is \$13, payable through the registration.

Click-Here
TO **REGISTER**

<https://leesburgumc.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/188650>

Following the Narrative Lectionary Reading Plan (11 am in AG or Blue Room)

There are two groups that are following the reading plan which accompanies the sermons series as it follows God's Story of redemption in Scripture. Beginning in January and continuing through Easter, these groups will be focused on the Gospel According to Matthew. The group in the AG is facilitated by Carl Snyder and Steve Chapin. The group in the Blue Room is facilitated by Sue Bourke and Sharon Reith. Materials are free, registration helps leaders know to expect you and prepare materials.

Click-Here
TO **REGISTER**

<https://leesburgumc.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/188680>

Adult Sunday School (9:45 am in the AG)

This group is facilitated by Kim Kadesch.

Click-Here
TO **REGISTER**

<https://leesburgumc.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/188693>

Parlor Group (9:45 am in the Parlor)

This group is facilitated by David Graves and Bryan Talbot and is managed by Donna Varn. In January, they will continue with the Ray Vander Laan and supplemental materials. Materials are free, registration helps leaders know to expect you and prepare materials.

Click-Here
TO **REGISTER**

<https://leesburgumc.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/188690>

Grow

Children's Ministry

Visit www.leesburgumc.org/kids
for more information

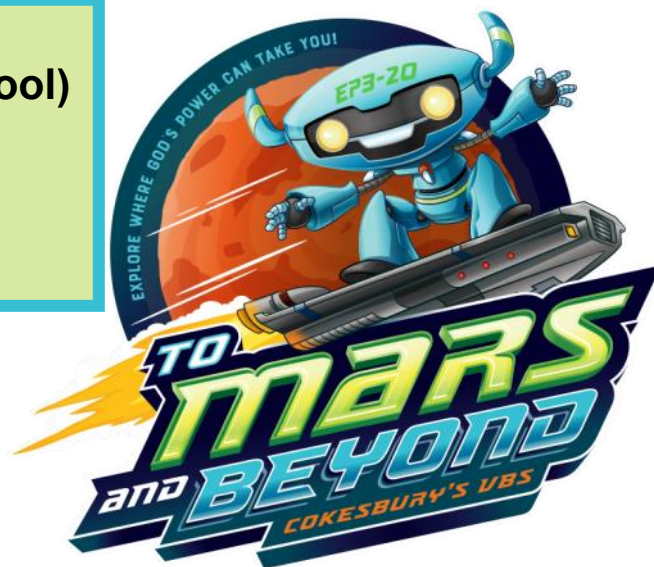
And let us run with perseverance the
race marked out for us



VBS: (Vacation Bible School)

June 24—29, 2019

Registration opens February 6




Christmas Pageant

In case you missed
it, here are A few
photos from the
Christmas Pageant
on December 9



Youth Key Dates

Visit www.leesburgumc.org/ywc for more information and full calendar

January 6	9:45 Gallery 6 pm—7:30 Youth Group
January 13	9:45 Gallery 6 pm—7:30 Youth Group
January 18—19	Lock-in 
January 20	9:45 Gallery
January 27	9:45 Gallery 6 pm—7:30 Youth Group



Youth Lock-in and
THE AMAZING RACE

Click Here
TO **REGISTER**

<https://leesburgumc.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/188741>



World Vision 30 HOUR FAMINE

Hunger isn't just. But your hunger can be.

JUST HUNGER.



30 Hour Famine: March 15 - 16

The What:

Thirty hours. It's just over one day, but in that short time, more than 7,000 kids will die of hunger-related causes.

The Why:

The question is, will you care enough to let their hunger move you to action? Inspired by the love of God, you can join the fight: to keep kids alive; to give food to all who go hungry; to hunger for justice.

The How:

When you do the 30 Hour Famine, you're opening your eyes to the reality of global poverty. The funds you raise will bring hope to hungry kids: your brothers and sisters in the family of God. After registering, please set-up your fundraising page (see confirmation e-mail).

We will spend about 24 hours at church doing various poverty-related activities to teach of the conditions faced by millions in the world today. It's a Lock-in, but with purpose and without food.*

We will close with a brief worship service that parents are strongly encouraged to come to, with Communion followed by a light meal.

* We will have juice at regular intervals. Those with medical conditions that prevent them from fasting should bring simple snacks that will be kept in a location removed from the group.



Click Here
TO **REGISTER**

<https://leesburgumc.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/188745>

Grow

High School Retreat and 2019 SPY Info



This year's High School Retreat was an unusual one. I heard a rumor just before Thanksgiving that Fieldstone UMC, the church that hosts SPY (Summer Project Youth, our annual youth mission trip), would be merging with another church while they "figure what to do with their building." First, I panicked, then I prayed. I felt a peace that God had a plan, and we just needed to let things unfold.

Upon confirming the news of Fieldstone, I panicked again, then prayed again. There are not very many mission trips that allow middle & school high school kids to be combined, nor that allow middle school students to do much in the way of work, nor that can accommodate a group our size (74 last year). I was reminded that Tim Dayton, the man who had made SPY what it was, had left to start a new program in Roanoke, remarkably called: REACH in Roanoke.

I contacted him and worked with the Director of Operations and found that they could take all of us, on the same week that families have blocked on their calendars and that the structure would be very similar to what we had become comfortable with.

I hoped to keep the changes under wraps until I could tell as many of our youth as possible at one time. You might be surprised to learn that teenagers love traditions and are skeptical of change just as much as everyone else. So, upon arriving at Eagle Eyrie in Lynchburg at 9:30 pm on a Friday night for the Fall Retreat, I gathered all 31 high school students together and broke the news that we would not be able to return to SPY in 2019.

I gave them a few minutes for the shock to wear off and then let them know of this new opportunity. I invited any who wanted to go to drive down to Roanoke the following day during the workshop portion of the retreat and check out REACH. We then sent them off to join their small groups, while the adults unpacked the vehicles and waited for their return.

On Saturday, we participated in worship and small groups, then while most went to workshops and had free time, Karl Higgins and I drove 13 juniors and seniors, and one sophomore, to Roanoke.

We were met by Tim and Casey, who gave us background into REACH and a good comparison between REACH and SPY. From Tim's perspective, REACH works much more closely with local agencies to connect with the people who most need help in the community. Students will have the opportunity to work on homes, as they did with SPY, but also to work in the homeless shelter, the local food pantry, and the animal shelter. They would also be given the opportunity, if they chose, to run a VBS for the neighborhood kids.

A couple of things that make REACH very different from SPY are:

- It is year-round. They have groups come on weekends that continue the work all year.

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- They have a year-round staff which adds continuity and maintains relationships in the community.
- It is in a different building and a different city.
- It is more urban; groups will not have long drives to their work sites.
- They buy abandoned homes, fix them up, work with the bank and community organizations to make sure deserving families are able to purchase the homes.
- Evening programming takes place out in the community

It will be an adjustment to change our summer mission trip this year, but the youth who went on the tour were very excited about the opportunities this will bring. We are looking into bringing our seniors down in May, so they can work with the staff to plan our week and be much more involved in the development of the program.

Upon returning to the retreat, the seniors and I got ready and headed off to the Senior Banquet, a really fun and wonderful tradition of the High School Retreat. The rest of our group had their dinner and then we all met up for worship and small groups. There was a lip sync contest which some of our youth attended, while the rest enjoyed fellowship time in the cabin. We heard that a few of our youth who went on the field trip mentioned in their small group and discovered another group had attended both SPY and REACH in the past and gave REACH very high marks.

On Sunday, we participated in closing worship and drove back to Leesburg.

As we move forward to our new summer mission experience, we appreciate your prayers and support.



Reach

Great Beginnings Preschool

Happy 2019 to all! I hope you had a magical Christmas and wonderful New Year. We have an exciting January ahead at GBP:

January 2: GBP classes resume.

January 2/3: Holiday pajama and ugly sweater days. We're getting one more wear out of those holiday favorites in hopes of easing back into school schedules.

January 9/10: GBP Parent Appreciation Breakfasts. Our staff provides coffee and breakfast for our GBP parents. GBP parents are such a huge source of support for our staff. Each child's needs are unique and we rely on parent input and communication to ensure our Sunbeams' success. We are blessed by each of our preschool families!

January 13: Preschool Sunday and GBP Bake Sale. Our Sunbeams will share songs with the congregation before enjoying a special lesson. GBP parents will provide goodies for our Bake Sale in Wesley Hall. We can't wait to share what we've been up to this year!

January 14: Early Registration begins for the 2019-20 school year for LUMC members, current GBP families, and GBP alumni. To register, fill out our Application Form: http://www.greatbeginningsleesburg.com/Application_Form_2019_pdf.pdf and return to GBP between January 14 and February 1 with your \$75 registration fee.

February 4: Open Registration begins for the 2019-20 school year.

Our color and shape for the month of January are white and rectangle. We're concentrating on the letters L, M, N, and O this month and the numbers 6 and 13. Our themes include winter, migration, Martin Luther King, Jr, dreams, snow, and Ground Hog Day.

In Chapel, our Bible verse for January is from Isaiah 60:1, "Arise, shine for your light has come." We'll follow Jesus from his trip to exile to his baptism. In Music, our composer of the month is Franz Schubert. We will look at rhythm versus beat and use storybooks to create music.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Best wish for an amazing 2019!

Heather Gonzalez, Preschool Director
greatbeginningsleesburg@gmail.com



Christmas Gift Tree Thank You

Thank you to all you went out and bought gifts and clothing for our 50 Angels, bought 50 gifts for the Youth at the Loudoun County Youth Shelter, and bought \$215.00 worth of gift cards for Loudoun Hunger Relief this year. Your gifts have surely brought a smile to recipients receiving them. I also hope that it has demonstrated God's love them for them, no matter their circumstances.



Backpack Buddies

Through the LUMC Backpack Buddies program, we provide support to local school children who have been identified as needing additional food over the weekend. During the school year, each child receives a backpack filled with six meals for the weekend. LUMC packs bags of food during the school year on the first Sunday of each month in Asbury Hall after the 9:45 worship service. Our next packing is January 6th

How You Can Help

- 1) Donate money. Write "Backpack Buddies" on your check memo or offering envelope.
- 2) Donate food items. Please place the listed items in the designated bins in Wesley Hall.
- 3) Donate your time. Help fill the backpacks. It only takes an hour, it's lots of fun, and it's a wonderful way to help serve children in our community. All ages can help, including kids.

Your participation is always greatly appreciated. If you have any questions please contact Barbara Luna at 703-606-1256 after 6:30 pm or email blunalsbrg@aol.com.

Food Items for Backpack Buddies
individual cups of ravioli, beefaroni, or spaghetti; granola bars; cereal (single-serve boxes); instant oatmeal; fruit cups; single-serve applesauce cups, shelf-stable milk (white or chocolate); juice boxes; macaroni and cheese cups; cheese crackers



Packing Dates

Jan 6
Feb 3
Mar 3
Apr 7
May 5

Reach

Let's Celebrate 2018 Missions Giving!

LUMC's response to God's abundance in our lives is to give generously and abundantly to our Leesburg Community and beyond! Your generosity means others can experience God's love through our gifts; thank you for all your gifts in 2018. Those on the receiving end of your gifts will know kindness and will feel loved. Blessings, Margrit Snyder, Missions Coordinator

Here is what God has done through LUMC from January through November 2018.

LUMC has bountifully provided many types of goods to various causes:

- LUMC provided 2,574 backpacks of food for Catoctin Elementary School reduced or free lunch children who receive food every weekend during the school year.
- LUMC provided Loudoun Hunger Relief with \$515 in gift cards and 2,500 pounds of food.
- LUMC fulfilled the wishes of 50 children through the Salvation Army Angel Tree.
- LUMC provided 50 gifts for teens at the Loudoun County Youth Shelter.
- LUMC filled 102 Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes that will bring smiles and God's love to children around the world

LUMC also has generously given monetary gifts through our Designated Giving:

- UMCOR—\$1314.11
- Loudoun Hunger Relief—\$1,368
- Backpack Buddies—\$8,115
- To our missionaries through the Lent Offering—\$1,050
- To our missionaries through the Easter Offering—\$5,200
- To our missionaries through Special Sundays—\$238

The LUMC Missions Team: For more information or if you have questions about Missions at Leesburg UMC, please contact Missions Chair Margrit Snyder at missions@leesburgumc.org.



LUMC Supports Loudoun Hunger Relief (LHR)

The First Sunday of each month is Food Insecurity Sunday. Please help us support Loudoun Hunger Relief by bringing food and other items to Wesley Hall. If you know you aren't going to be here the first Sunday of the month, you can drop off your donations in Wesley Hall anytime the church is open.

Thank you for your generosity!

Shopping List:

Cereal
100% juice
Canned tuna
Canned chicken
Peanut Butter
Canned fruit
Canned peas

Canned green beans
Canned corn
Toothpaste
Toothbrushes
Feminine hygiene products
Diapers

Leesburg United Methodist Women Celebrates Reaching Others in 2018

Leesburg United Methodist Women are humbly grateful to every member of our congregation for your meaningful prayers and unending support in the past year. As a UMW unit in 2018 we continued to provide prayer and monetary, as well as hands-on, support to many missions:

Around the world—

- \$5000+ to UMW missions that support direct services to persons in need around the world. Monies are donated via our UMW Pledge to Mission, World Thank Offering, Gifts in Mission, Gifts in Memory, Candle-burning, and Special Mission Recognition.
- 274 “kits for conference” for UMCOR

Within Virginia—

- \$100 to the United Methodist Forum College
- \$100 to Henry Fork Service Center, Franklin County Virginia, supporting underprivileged children and their families through a variety of services
- \$100 to Wesley Community Service Center, Portsmouth Virginia

Within our church and community—

- \$718 to ECHO
- \$530 to Birthright of Loudoun
- Lunches for Habitat for Humanity weekend workers (\$200 value)
- Cooked and delivered 280+servings of green beans and 110 pounds of mashed potatoes for the Salvation Army Thanksgiving Dinner on 11/20/18
- Donations to Mobile Hope of Loudoun (\$200 cash and useful items)
- 23 pounds of food to Loudoun Hunger Relief (\$285 cash)
- Donations to Loudoun Abused Women's Shelter, Christmas gifts (est. \$400), and dinners for Parenting Classes (\$600 value)
- Christmas gifts for 35 residents of Birmingham Green nursing home (\$900 value)
- \$630 Tuition assistance for children attending Great Beginnings Pre-school
- \$3,000 Georgia W. Bange Scholarships to three LUMC graduating youth
- \$7,000+ to the American Cancer Society (via team donations)
- \$265 Loudoun Hospital Foundation
- Hands on work with Loudoun Hunger Relief, Loudoun Caregivers, Salvation Army, prison ministry, community dinners
- Prayer shawl ministry

Our LUMW is actively meeting, praying and supporting one another. We expand our spiritual knowledge via the UMW reading program (78 books read in 2018), as well as circle meeting programs. We are active in the community via hands on work, as we reach out to share the love of God with our neighbors. We invite women of all ages to become a member of United Methodist Women. Membership is open to anyone who has a desire to belong in support of mission and the UMW purpose.

Below are the names of our four circles, monthly meeting times, and chair-person. Call any of us if you have a question, or would like to visit a meeting. More information can be found on the UMW bulletin board in the LUMC office hallway.

Hannah's Sisters Circle	3rd Wednesday	6:30 pm	Vicky Weaver
Susanna Wesley Circle	2nd Monday	7 pm	Nancy Wolford
Kathryn Eye Circle	2nd Tuesday	10:30 am	Martha Robin
Sunshine Circle	3rd Monday	7 pm	Connie Snodgrass, Lynn Kolonich

Consider visiting a circle meeting in 2019! Women of all ages are invited to join us.

Betsy Creamer, LUMW President

United Methodist Women is a community of women whose purpose is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ, to develop a creative supportive fellowship and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church.

Steward

Next Level Innovations: Update

Happy New Year! Now that the holidays are over, the focus teams are gearing up for next steps. Here's a quick update on what's already happened:

Vision Team met with our mentor Kirk Nave to review our vision alignment plan and develop a list of priorities for each of the focus groups to make sure we are putting vision in the "driver's seat".

Hospitality Team took advantage of the influx of Christmas guests by experimenting with the 5:00 pm service. All guests attending the 5:00 pm service received a gift thanking them for worshipping with us. As a follow up, guests will receive a letter this week and a home delivery of a gift and information on LUMC next week. As another innovation, attendance sheets were included in the bulletins at all Christmas Eve services. The team also researched hospitality techniques at several other churches and carefully reviewed the Mystery Worshipper reports we received.

Communications Task Force conducted interviews with various members of the congregation, particularly those in a leadership role, to assess our current modes of communicating. In order to get solid congregation feedback on communications, surveys were also included in the weekly bulletin for several weeks. Based on internal LUMC feedback and research of other churches, the Task Force has drafted and is reviewing their recommendations report. Their goal is to present the final report to the CLT within the next two weeks.

Save the Date! The first Town Hall meeting is scheduled for 2/27/2019. More information to come.

Reach Team is developing plans to grow a church wide emphasis on identifying and reaching our neighbors in Leesburg (i.e., individual neighborhoods, downtown Leesburg, civic groups, schools, etc.). Team members are gaining insight from the book *The Art of Neighboring*, which will also be the basis for a sermon series after the Easter season. They also plan to combine prayer-walking with our Lenten disciplines providing specific tools to help us be effective prayer-walkers.

Connect Team is planning to deepen the Disciple Group experience by showing members how to identify and

develop their own stories; practice sharing their stories with the group; discuss possible opportunities for sharing; identify their "circles of influence"; and pray for the Holy Spirit to empower them. Time will also be set aside in worship for members to learn about this process and hear the stories that are coming out of Disciple Groups to celebrate how God is working in our lives. Sharing our stories connect us with God and each other in a profound way.

Save the Date! Sharing Your Faith Workshop (Small Group) is planned for 2/10/2019 from 6:30 – 9:30 pm.

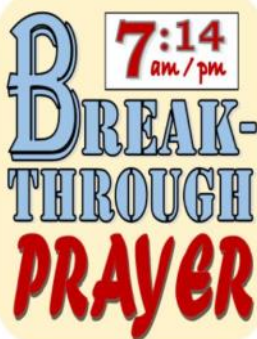
Our breakthrough prayer is being revised to reflect what we as a church are now seeking from God, post NLI approval. We will have one prayer for the whole congregation to be praying together, and a specific prayer for each Task Force.

The Seniors ministry is being revitalized to include intergenerational events such as "pilgrimages" to religious and cultural sites.

Missional Engagement Team met and brainstormed about areas where LUMC can have an impact in our community. In February, the Rev. Joanna Dietz, Braddock Street UMC Deacon, is scheduled to train the team on assessing local needs.

The Master Tracker which provides more detail on the various focus groups' activities can be accessed from the [NLI Documents page](http://www.leesburgumc.org/uploads/NLITracker1-3-19.pdf). <http://www.leesburgumc.org/uploads/NLITracker1-3-19.pdf>

These are exciting days for LUMC! Please celebrate with each other our accomplishments toward living out our vision: **To be followers of Jesus (witness) – one with God (worship) and with each other (small groups) – ministers to all the world (missions/ministry).**



Our Breakthrough Prayer:
 O God, awesome and holy! Break through into our lives and our church with your presence and power. May it be, O God! Fill us with your Holy Spirit to discern your will. May it be, O God! Strengthen us to live with courageous faith. Break through our lives and our church with new opportunities, new life, and new power to do far more than we could ever imagine. May it be, O God! In Jesus' name. Amen.

The United Methodist Church “Called General Conference”

February 23-26, 2019

The purpose of the called General Conference¹ is “to receive and act on a report from the Commission on a Way Forward (COWF), based on the recommendations of the Council of Bishops in 2016.” The 32-member Commission was instructed “to examine paragraphs in The United Methodist Book of Discipline² concerning human sexuality,” explore options to strengthen the unity of the church, and make recommendations to the Council of Bishops. This has been done.

COWF Report:

http://s3.amazonaws.com/Website_Properties/council-of-bishops/news_and_statements/documents/Way_Foward_Report_-_Final_-_ENGLISH.pdf

From the Commission’s report, the Bishops have put forth three recommendations to the General Conference for decision. Additional information, including three presentations covering the three primary recommendations can be found at:

<http://www.umc.org/topics/general-conference-2019-special-session>

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- 1 “General Conference” is the top policy-making body of the global United Methodist Church, which meets every four years. It is comprised of an equal number of clergy and laity from around the world. These delegates were elected by, and represent, their respective Annual Conferences. The Virginia Annual Conference is represented by 11 clergy and 11 laity. None of these are from the Winchester District. A list of all delegates, including our reps from Virginia can be found at the Virginia Conference website: <http://www.vaumc.org/ncfilerepository/2019GC/RosterofDelegates.pdf>

The next regularly scheduled General Conference will take place May 5-15, 2020, at the Minneapolis Convention Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

- 2 2 United Methodist Book of Discipline – primary paragraphs in question: Paragraph 161.II.C,D, E,F,G; Paragraph 304.3; Paragraph 341.6. There is a copy of the 2016 Book of Discipline in our church library, along with previous editions (updated every four years).
Free online access: <https://www.cokesbury.com/forms/DynamicContent.aspx?id=87&pageid=920>

Happy New Year from the Financial Secretary!

2018 Giving Statements

Those of you who use InFellowship will receive an email notice when all 2018 giving has been recorded and you can access your final 2018 statement information for income tax use. Those without an InFellowship account set up will receive a printed statement by mail that we will mail no later than January 31st.

Remember: your giving record can be viewed online through InFellowship. Go to leesburgumc.org/infellowship for instructions on how to set up and access your account. You can even give online and set up recurring payments to ensure you never miss an offering. Information for Sunday giving through the offering plate is typically recorded one or two weeks after its date—call or email the church office if you have any questions about your giving info or what has been recorded.



Leesburg United Methodist Church

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The February Newsletter is scheduled to be published on Friday, February 1st. All items are due to the office by 9 am on Monday, January 28th. Thank you!

General Conference Prayer Challenge

All United Methodists are urged to pray daily for four minutes, corresponding to the four days of our called General Conference in February. Since the beginning date is 2/23, for some the time, 2:23 PM (or AM), may be a helpful reminder to pray.

In addition to prayer, all United Methodists who are physically able to do so, are encouraged to fast on Fridays through breakfast and lunch, and to use the time for prayer. For those who cannot fast from food, other options might be to fast from social media, or something else where the time normally spent could be used prayer.



Inclement Weather Policy

As winter weather approaches, just a reminder that LUMC will be open for worship on Sundays, regardless of the weather, except in very extreme conditions such as a hurricane, 100-year flood, blinding blizzard conditions, etc..

Always use good judgment and err on the side of safety when inclement weather hits the area. Check the church's website when in doubt.

