

Lithopolis United Methodist Church

Inviting people to be in relationship with Jesus and each other so that lives and communities are changed



Our Youth Group game night.

New Life

“Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn... you will have pain, but your pain will turn into joy. When a woman is in labor, she has pain because her time has come. But when her baby is born she no longer remembers the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world. So you have pain, but I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will be able to take away your joy.” - John 16:20-22



Welcome to the world, Joanna Feldman!

This is Jesus’ own telling of the Easter story—anguish turned to joy, the journey from the cross to the empty tomb likened to a woman who is giving birth. For me, Jesus’ choice of metaphor took on new and special meaning this year. Throughout the past several months, I have joked with many of you about the “untimeliness” of the due date for the arrival of our second child. From a practical standpoint, having a baby right around Easter as a pastor is, well, not exactly ideal. However, from a spiritual standpoint, it was rich beyond words.



Palm Sunday Kids Choir

In the days following our shared journey through Holy Week, with the heavy solemnity of Good Friday and the elation of Easter Sunday morning, I stood beside my wife, Michelle, as she bore the anguish of labor (seeking to comfort her but feeling largely helpless in the face of such pain) only to share a short while later inexpressible joy with her as we held precious little Joanna for the first time.

Birth is always a sacred experience. However, having just come through Holy Week, Joanna’s birth felt, at least to me, even more deeply connected to the Gospel—to the ongoing story of God’s redeeming work in the world and in our lives. And that divine good news, embodied in Jesus’ death and resurrection, seemed to hit a little closer to home this year as well... and not just because of Joanna’s soon-coming birth...

“New Life” continued from Page 1.

For the first time in two years, we celebrated Easter together, *in-person with a full sanctuary!* The choir belted out “Christ the Lord is Risen Today!” Some of our young adults brought the scene at the empty tomb to life through a drama.* Our Rock City kids helped me out with the sermon that day—after blessing us the week before with a children’s choir rendition of “Hosanna, Loud Hosanna.” We even had 30 people who gathered at dawn in freezing temperatures for a sunrise service at Wagnalls. Talk about a hearty crew!



Easter morning drama

It was a beautiful day of celebration. A celebration of what God has done for us through Jesus Christ. And also a day of celebrating the new life that God is bringing into our lives, and the life of our church family, during this long-awaited season of reprieve from the burdensome toll of the pandemic. After an extended Lent-like season, it felt like Easter had finally and earnestly arrived!

As the Easter season continues (on the church calendar it lasts for 40 days after Easter Sunday), I find myself praising God for the gift of his son Jesus *and* for the gift of a beautiful new daughter *and* for the gift of fresh, energized life with which he has been blessing our church family. And as I reflect on the Easter story, I also find myself praising God that all of those things seem to be divinely interconnected in ways that are gloriously beyond my full tracing out (Rom. 11:33). “For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be the glory forever. Amen” (Rom. 11:36).

In the joy of new life!

Alex Feldman, Pastor

** A huge THANK YOU to everyone who helped make that happen—from directing to acting, from sewing curtains to setting up the sound and lighting, from pulling curtains off the windows to making the tomb out of paper mache!*

Habitat for Humanity Wall Build

A team from our church went to Lancaster to help with a new Habitat for Humanity home. They spent the day raising four walls and doing some sheet work. It was a wonderful way to continue our partnership with Habitat for Humanity! And, thanks to Chef Frank, the team had a great meal to break up the day. Thank you all for your continued support of this ministry! We hope to offer more Wall Build days in the future.



Easter Egg Hunt

Our Easter Egg Hunt was a wonderful time to connect with the community! Over 300 people came out to participate in the crafts, story time, breakfast, and egg hunt we had at Wagnalls Memorial Library. Thank you to our 30+ volunteers who helped to make all of this possible! The youth are expert egg hiders too!



Confirmation

By Ray Tiell

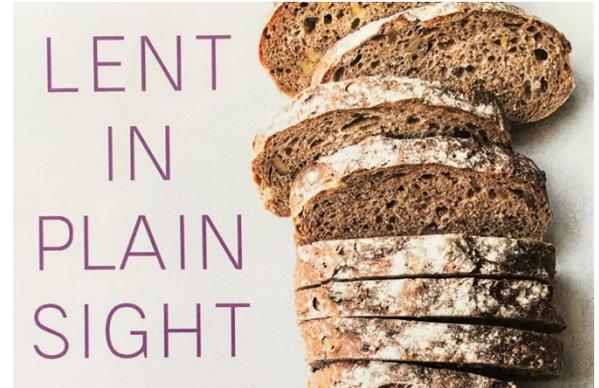
We're excited to announce that we have just started our first confirmation class since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. We have 8 students participating in the class, ranging from 7th to 9th grade. We'll be covering a wide range of topics including church history, prayer, and why church feels boring sometimes! Trent Mayne is serving as the youth ministry intern this summer, and he's assisting in leading the class. We ask that you keep these students in your prayers as they gather throughout the summer to learn about what it means to be a follower of Jesus as a young person in the church.



Lent in Plain Sight

By Ray Tiell

Lent has traditionally been a time for reflection on what it means to follow Jesus in the broken world we inhabit. This year, on each of the six Wednesdays of Lent, about 60 people gathered to do just that. Alex and myself led short devotional messages centered around objects which remind us of Christ’s work and his presence with us. For example, bread is something most of us eat every day, and Scripture is full of references to yeast which makes bread rise. Children and teens were invited to join and participate in skits, games, and illustrations as part of the lesson. It was exciting to see the youth getting excited about it, and they even designated one row as “the youth pew”.



What really made these gatherings so special was the small group time afterwards. Some of our life groups split off to work through some discussion questions and have prayer and sharing time, but those who were not part of those groups were invited to stay and meet together. The coffee and hot chocolate by the tables in the lobby created a fun atmosphere. It has been a long time since our church family has gotten to try something new like this, and it was refreshing to see folks making new friends, hugging, and even staying around to keep talking long past our official end time. After a couple difficult years, we have much to be thankful for from this sweet Lenten season!



FINANCE FOCUS

Financial data thru March 31, 2022

Fund Balances

General	\$171,048
Building	\$21,101
Planned Replacement	\$66,014
Endowment	\$ 62,843
Other Designated Funds	\$ 64,732

General Fund Activity

Contributions to the General Fund pay for general operating expenses of the church including music expense, payroll expense, office supply expense, parsonage maintenance and utilities, church maintenance and utilities, and apportionments.

General Fund	Mar-22	YTD 2022
Contributions	40,085	120,197
Expenses	39,780	122,789
Difference	305	(2,592)

- YTD 2022 General Fund contributions have increased 9.3% compared to 2021.

Building Fund Activity

Building Fund Income for March 2022 = \$1,071

Other Designated Funds

Designated Funds are funds that are contributed to LUMC for a specific purpose. Some examples are: Different Kind of Christmas, Local Missions, Conference Special Offerings, and Memorials.

Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

2 Corinthians 9:7 NIV

Questions or Comments? Contact Amy Bratton, LUMC Treasurer
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