



Lithopolis United Methodist Church

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



Our rising 3rd Graders with their new Bibles: (left to right) Conley Sykora, Grayson Hart, McKenzie Whetstone, Noah Ling, Ava Bratton, Kayson Milligan, Johayden Browning, Lucas Smith, Sophia Weaver, Ruth Jones, Cody Lysinger

About This Newsletter Edition

By Charles Martindell

In this edition of our quarterly newsletter, we'll be sharing about how your church is responding to the challenges being faced. Like many of you, I've been so thankful to God for the generosity and service being given in so many ways. Our current Sermon Series is inviting us to rely on the power of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to bring a "Hope Always Rising". As a faith community, we're living into that hope, even as we are counting on God's gifts of life during a global pandemic!

What you'll find inside:

- Financial Update
- Rock City Children's Ministry
- Youth Ministry
- Small Groups
- Outreach in the Community



Keep reading for a snapshot of how LUMC is following Jesus even now. Perhaps the irony will be recognized by all of us: *Even though not meeting in person on Sundays, with God's help, we remain a vital church.* We can still be among the communities of faith through which God is changing lives and transforming our community and world.



We've had a great response to homemade face masks for the Columbus Developmental Center!

Being the Church – Community First

As soon as Ohio received the “Stay at Home” order, the leadership of the church began finding ways to prioritize our connections to our community and each other. Rather than beginning with a focus on the costs of ministry at LUMC, the decision was made to prioritize support for our Local Food Pantry, Bloom Crisis Fund, and a growing support for the Blessing Box program of the surrounding region (see related story). We also reached out to our Ministry Partners and were able to provide special gifts in support of the work at Henderson Settlement (Frakes, KY) and Good Works Ministries (Athens, Ohio).



Blessing Box volunteers.



Keith Wasserman with Good Works.

Thanks to previous acts of generous contributions to our church’s Mission Fund, special gifts were quickly sent to the Canal Winchester Food Pantry (\$4,500), Good Works and Henderson Settlement (\$1,500 each). The notes of appreciation from these partners in service were heart-warming and clearly arrived at a time of great need.

Financial Update at LUMC

As of the end of April, contributions to support the costs of ministry at the church are 19% behind where they were at this point in 2019. Obviously, this represents a challenge that remains for us to meet. Our Leadership Board’s HR and Finance Sub Teams have been meeting to make plans were our financial resources to limit some of the ways LUMC is providing ministry for the church family and community.

Bonnie Sallee is our lead Financial Secretary and she describes a hope-filled response in spite of the present need. “Many of our regular contributors are sending in their offerings to the church office and many others are making use of our online giving opportunities. In some cases, first time givers have stepped forward, and some have increased their giving too.” Although the office is currently closed, mail is still being received at P.O. Box 42, 80 N. Market St., Lithopolis, 43136 (Please note that a P.O. Box

“Contributions...are 19% behind where they were at this point in 2019. Obviously, this represents a challenge that remains for us to meet.”

is now required for mail sent to the church). And our online giving opportunities can be reached through the mid-week and Sunday emails, or at the website www.lithopolisumc.org. our thanks to everyone who continues to generously support all that the church is doing!

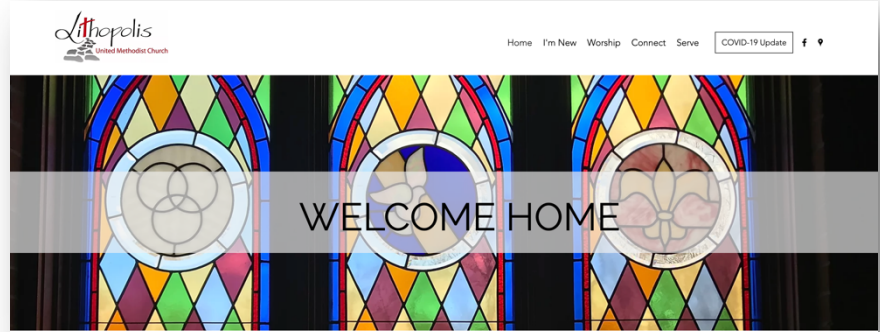


Bonnie Sallee

Worship Opportunities

How do we worship Jesus when we can't go to church? Hopefully everyone is staying connected to Christ and has joined us for our Sunday online worship services. Released each Sunday at 9 a.m. on both our Facebook page and website, these services include gifts of music, times of prayer, and a sermon by either Pastor Charles or Pastor Alex.

We added Discussion Questions that can help with personal application of each week's message from the Bible, and which can provide conversation starters in homes, or personal reflection moments that help us respond to how God is leading. But what about those who do not use email or internet? On Mondays, a letter is sent to the 20 or so families of the church who would be left out if the only option for worship relies on the web. The letter summarizes that week's sermon and includes the Discussion Questions. We want no one to be left out of the life of the church! Goals for when we are able to begin meeting in person on Sundays include every week live-streaming of at least one of our two regular Sunday services.



Church Website: www.LithopolisUMC.org



From Linda Hoshor:

"Church, I don't know how I would have gotten through this without my Savior and my church. Charles, Alex, Bud, Barb, Kathy and Karen. Your kindness means the world to me."

From Keith Wasserman of Good Works, Inc. - A Community of Hope

"This is a very difficult time for many of us but especially for those who live alone... It is in these times that we learn to stand firm, give ourselves to the work God has trusted us with and persevere in loving and serving people as a community, as best as we can, knowing that our work and our love is not in vain. Thanks for checking in! LOVE is still a verb, kw"

From Aletha Mullins of the Canal Winchester Community Food Pantry

"Your continued support makes a huge difference. Thank you so much!"

From Mark Smith of Navigators (During Lent, over \$2,300 of support for Mark's mission to Croatia was raised)

"We are going to be delayed until probably at least late September or later [due to the coronavirus]. In the meantime, I have reignited my original University of Central Florida Bible study over Zoom and continue with the fund raising [for the move to Croatia]. We see much of this isolation as similar to what our lives will be like while living in Croatia."

From James Knight of Henderson Settlement

"Your contribution has been exceptionally critical given the impacts our community and organization are experiencing due to the COVID-19 crisis. I cannot begin to express our sincere thanks for what you have done."

Blessing Boxes Go Regional

One helpful practice in discerning God's missional calling—in our lives personally and as a church—is to try to identify the intersection between assets/gifts that we have and the needs around us. As we do this prayerfully and patiently, it is amazing what God's Spirit often reveals! This has definitely been the case over the last couple months as our church family has sought to answer the question: God, what is it that you are calling us to in this particular time?

The need felt overwhelming and at times the restrictions felt insurmountable, but God started to make us more and more aware of the assets that were already present in our midst. We have a Blessing Box—a small food pantry that operates on the simple principle “leave what you can, take what you need”—already on our church property. The person who founded the Blessing Box Project in the greater Columbus area is a part of our church family. One of our church members is a manager at a local grocery store. Several people from our congregation and community were more than willing to lend a hand. Others wanted to contribute financially. You can see how the pieces began to come together!



“I sure feel blessed to be a part of this amazing team effort to reach out and get the much-needed food and other supplies to those in need in our communities!! Everyone is dedicating not only their time but also their hearts!!” – Denise Price



“It was really great to ‘DO SOMETHING GOOD’ for Jesus!... Praying that more people get the opportunity to be blessed by helping feed those less fortunate than us.” – Mike Smith

Realizing that the small Blessing Box behind the Student Ministry Center may not support an increased need during this time, we turned the entryway at the church building into a large Blessing Box. We also mobilized a team to distribute food to other Blessing Boxes in the Columbus area, particularly those located in neighborhoods where food insecurity was a prominent issue even prior to the pandemic. So far, we have distributed over \$1,000 worth of food (in addition to other donated food and hygiene items). Thanks to generous contributions from you all and a grant from a local organization, we will be distributing \$3,000 worth of food throughout May and June. Thanks to the help of numerous, willing servants that much needed food will find its way into the hands of people in Franklinton, Hilltop, Whitehall, Linden, Merion Village, Reynoldsburg, Canal Winchester, Carroll, and right here in Lithopolis!

In these days, the need is great. I am reminded of the time when Jesus looked out over a crowd that had gathered, knowing their hunger—hunger that was physical as well as spiritual. In that moment he turned to his disciples and said, “You give them something to eat” (Matthew 14:16). The disciples brought the meager amount of food that they could scrounge together. It was not anywhere close to enough to feed the crowd—a mere drop in the bucket. But Jesus blessed what was shared and broke it and gave it to his disciples to distribute anyway. With full bellies, the crowd, as well as the disciples, marveled at the grace and power of Jesus. May that be true of our own small efforts to distribute food to the crowd in our own day! Thank you for being a part of this wonderful mission to help feed those in our community in the name of, and through the grace of, Jesus!

Masks from the Church

Since the start of Ohio's response to the coronavirus pandemic, home-made masks have been an important contribution to limiting the spread of the virus. Several weeks ago, we were contacted by the Columbus Developmental Center, who's employees go into homes of people living with special needs to offer assistance and services of various kinds. They asked us if we could help contribute masks for these service providers and the church responded generously! And to date, the church has sewn and given away over 250 masks in support of this community outreach! Way to go LUMC!!



Rock City Kids Ministry

As soon as churches were unable to meet on Sundays, our Rock City Ministry (Led by Tiffany Jones- Coordinator of Children and Family Ministries) began offering all kinds of ways to stay connected and continue to learn about Jesus. Crafts for children and parents confined to their homes were shared. Virtual Easter Egg Hunts were made available. Gift activities were delivered to as many homes as possible. Sunday Lessons were also shared along with Online Story times that added to family worship experiences.



Crafts at church to take home.



Cindy Wilson sharing a lesson.

Several of our regular Rock City Teachers and helpers were videoed reading Bible stories to our children. Barb Wood had never made a video of herself before and found it challenging. "I really enjoyed doing it since I miss all my Rock City kids. I try to picture them in my mind as they sit around the alphabet rug in Rock City." Cindy Wilson also helped with the weekly stories and "appreciated the chance to stay in touch with the kids and for them to know we miss being with them and pray for them and their families."

Our annual gifts of Bibles for our Third Graders went forward with Bibles delivered to our children at home. We asked Sophia Weaver why she thinks it's important to have her own Bible. "If I'm alone, I can be studying it." When asked what she would like to learn more about from the Bible, Sophia had this in mind: "How did Jesus come back alive." Ruthie Jones also shared with us that "It was GREAT to receive a Bible from the church!" She quickly shared her gift with her grandparents too.



Sophia Weaver



Ruth Jones



HopeKeepers

Hope Keepers is a group of persons from the church who live with chronic illness and yet rely on God's gift of hope that empowers their service and support of others. Zoom meetings have continued to take place as this caring group has stayed connected and active. Emily Miller and Linda Plummer lead this vital ministry. Emily shares: "Our continued meeting is one of the advantages of Zoom! We've been able to meet twice during the quarantine and it's wonderful to have something that is somewhat normal. It was just so heartwarming to see and hear from our group. We continue to encourage each other to reach out to others via our card outreach, calls and prayers." To attend a Hope Keepers gathering, watch for information included with our weekly email updates.

Growing Together

The idea of this weekly event is to gather families with children of all ages for intergenerational activities and opportunities for adult study groups as well. Since the Pandemic quarantine, the group has continued to meet via Zoom. Here's what some of the participants have shared:

From Elizabeth Jones:

Growing Together has been a lot of fun for [our daughter] Ruth to join with other children from the church. Tiffany has come up with awesome games and crafts for the children. We went one time at the church when school was in session, but it has been easier to participate during the quarantine since we are not traveling! I have also participated in the adult evening discussions when I am able. These discussions have been helpful to know other Christians have the same worries and celebrations. I cannot say enough good things about Alex and Tiffany. They are so generous with their time and gifts.



Craft time during Growing Together's Zoom meeting.

And from Lorne Sykora:

Growing Together has been good for our family during the pandemic because it is great to "see" some of our church family as we are all going through this together. We miss them and it helps us to not feel so isolated during quarantine. The bible verses and lessons Ms. Tiffany reviews seem to provide a religious perspective as to what we are dealing with and how Jesus and God would respond in current times. There are fun games for the kids and crafts as well. It's a great little weekly break from the routine of the week. The kids look forward to it every Wednesday.

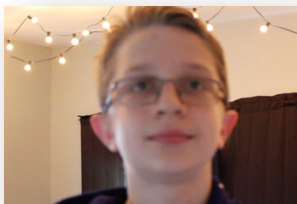


High School and Middle School Youth

Led by Youth and Family Coordinator Ray Tiell, all our youth gatherings have been through Zoom. And our adult volunteers and the youth are looking forward to when things get back to normal! The coronavirus pandemic landed in the middle of this year's Confirmation group study. We asked some of the youth about Confirmation and this is what they had to say:

From Jovie Cranmer:

The main thing she liked were the leaders and participants. She felt she could ask anything. People involved with and leading the group were fun and she liked how the topics covered were more in depth. Jovie felt like she learned more about God and her perspective of Jesus got bigger. She described that as understanding him as more than a Messiah.



From Matthew Gavorcik:

I enjoy meeting in person more, but it wasn't difficult [when we had to switch to Zoom]. We have been able to meet longer because we don't have to drive home too. It has been fun seeing my friends.

From Kaydence Neal:

It was helpful to be in a group and hear how other people were feeling about everything. Hearing 5 other minds helped me better understand how I felt myself. I had heard a lot of it before by being in church services or even in Eric's Sunday School class, but being in this group helped me grow my personal faith.



Small Group Life at LUMC

When we try to follow Jesus as a church, we often talk about 3 main things: Worship, Group, and Serve. Even during the pandemic, we're constantly living out our mission. Life Groups have (in many cases) continued to meet. Additional on-line groups have been added. And our UMW Circles have kept in touch with each other. One of those circles is known as Trinity. We asked Polly Anderson if she would share about how they've continued to remain connected.

From Polly Anderson:

Our fearless leader, Susan Black, has been great in keeping us connected and checking in as we navigate these odd times. In April, Trinity Circle was able to meet via Zoom on our regularly scheduled night. It certainly wasn't the same as gathering in someone's home, but it was wonderful to see the smiling faces of my sisters in Christ. We shared with one another, encouraged each other, and prayed together. Our May meeting is typically some sort of social outing. Susan organized a pandemic-friendly gathering at Slate Run. We each wore a mask, brought our own chair, and (large) circled-up near Buzzard's Roost. The evening was certainly good for my soul. I'm so thankful that Susan and the group have leveraged these creative ideas to help keep us connected as a church family.

Twenty Years of Blood Drives

Eric Anderson

It was the spring of 2000, and LUMC had just installed a sign out on the main road in Lithopolis. I was trying to think of what we could advertise on it to invite people in. Also on my mind, my dad had just died in January from a year-long battle with cancer. My mom had kept notes during his treatments, and I was able to total up that my dad had received 8 gallons of blood and 11 gallons of platelets over that year. It hit me that advertising a blood drive on the new sign could be a good option. I called the Red Cross to find out what was involved in holding a drive, and they were happy to partner with us. So, on the 4th of July weekend, 2000, through the efforts of many volunteers, LUMC held its first blood drive in the Narthex and old sanctuary. It was a success with 53 units of blood donated, and that included having 17 “first time” blood donors.

Having one blood drive grew into having 4 blood drives a year. When the MMC was opened, that made the blood drives more convenient. Through Carl Stebelton, the Lithopolis Masonic Lodge became a partner, which expanded us to having 6 blood drives a year.



Eric & Sarah Anderson at the first LUMC Blood Drive.



Blood Drive
Lithopolis United Methodist Church

Multi Ministry Center
80 N. Market St.
Lithopolis, OH 43136

Saturday, July 11, 2020
7:30 a.m. to 12:00 PM

To schedule an appointment call Lithopolis United Methodist Church at (614) 837-2230.

Receive a Columbus Zoo BOGO entry coupon & chance to win 4 Zoombezi Bay passes!

Schedule a blood donation appointment today:

Download the Blood Donor App | RedCrossBlood.org | 1-800-RED CROSS | 1-800-733-2767

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U.S. Center ID: 643622; Item ID: 000000; Date Rec'd: 03/14/12; APC: 00072

At our next blood drive on July 11, we will celebrate 20 years of blood drives at LUMC. The obvious blessing has been through the thousands of units of blood donated. This ministry has helped others, and it has literally saved lives. How blessed are we to be part of such a ministry? We also have the blessing of relationships that have grown through the years. There are always smiles and warm greetings from both the volunteers and the donors.

If you want to know more about our blood drives, we're happy to talk with you. Whether it is donating blood, putting up advertising posters, making phone calls, baking cookies, or serving the day of the drive, there's a place for you. To learn more, you can talk to Eric Anderson or Carl Stebelton, or you can drop your name off with the church office.

Thank you, LUMC, for supporting 20 years of blood drives.



Patty Black prepping to donate blood at one of the first drives.

Future possibilities and things we're praying about...

- What if we offered several Small Worship Gatherings outdoors, in various neighborhoods of the church? We're working on this possibility as a way to connect with each other as a community of faith and even as a way to live out our invitational mission as we include friends and neighbors with an invitation to these less formal gatherings. More on this to come!
- How do people take the step of membership in the church when we can't even gather at church? Under development is an Online New Members' Connections Study to be led by Pastor Charles. An online presentation would be made available and a Zoom discussion would also be scheduled where questions can be asked and a group can share in a discussion about faith and being part of LUMC.
- Some day (hopefully soon) we'll be worshipping at church again. As we move toward re-starting, we are making sure that we can offer Live Streaming of our future Sunday services as we anticipate people will in many cases need to delay their return to public gatherings. Our worship leadership teams and staff team are also exploring the many details including all sorts of safety practices and disinfection procedures- we will only return to worship when we can do so in a safe manner for whatever size group we are able to receive.

Postponements and Unknowns

Various Missions of the church have had to be delayed or even called off. Among those being considered or adjusted in terms of scheduling include:

- Carl's Build Home Building Mission
- Henderson Settlement Mission Trip (postponed to Fall)
- Good Works Mission Work Day (postponed to October)