

Lithopolis United Methodist Church

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



Images from our in-person worship services.

Note from the Pastor

"I will be found by you," declares the Lord, "and will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you...and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile." Jeremiah 29:14

Many of us are familiar with the beautiful promise in Jeremiah 29:11. *"For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope."* In its original context, this was a hopeful declaration in the midst of a dark time—words spoken to a people in exile who were longing to return home, to return to "normal." It is a promise that we have been clinging to throughout the last several months during our own time of "exile."

Maybe not quite as familiar to us are the words that make up the continuation of that divine promise. *"I will bring you back... I will gather you... I will bring you back"* (Jer. 29:14). Not only did God envision a hopeful future for his exiled children, he also envisioned a returning and a re-gathering.

We are in the midst of our own journey "back"—a return from online-only worship, from outdoor micro gatherings, from weekly sign ups, from attendance restrictions, and from covering our faces. We rejoice in the hopefulness of this journey "back"!



Ray Tiell, Youth Pastor, handing out graduation gifts to our recent graduates.

What you'll find inside:

- Church QR Code
- Youth Ministry Update
- Children's Ministry Update
- Meet Our Newest Staff
- Safety Monitors
- Financial Snapshot

But we must also see it as a journey *forward*. A journey toward new things that God is wanting to do among us, within us, and through us. There is much we have learned throughout the experience of this past year+. There is also much we have lost. Things will not be the same as they were before. There is sadness in that reality. Yet there is also potential.

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"Note from the Pastor" continued from Page 1.

The temptation on any return journey is to simply "go back" to the way things have always been. Certainly, there are things we will want to, and are looking forward to, reclaiming—things we will want to pick back up. But there are other things we will do well to release, so that our hands are free to take up new, creative ministry ventures that God will lead us toward.

The good news of Jesus is needed now as much as ever. In our returning, there are creative possibilities before us. We have been creatively engaged in God's mission together during our time of "exile"—gathering outdoors, delivering food to Blessing Boxes, developing and refining live-stream worship opportunities, gathering in groups during Lent in a hybrid fashion. We have had to step out of the box and dream with God in new ways. We have had to let go of things and pick up new things.

Even as we rejoice in being "back," let us continue to remain nimble and pliable in God's hands, that the Master Potter might shape us and use us in this new season as he so chooses, for the sake of his kingdom and his glory!

Grace & Peace,
Pastor Alex



Youth Cookout

By Ray Tiell

Hey church family, our youth group has welcomed the return of warm weather, and even celebrated it with a spring cookout last month. A day of hotdogs, smores, and kickball was much needed after a long winter!



GET THE ANNOUNCEMENTS ON YOUR PHONE!

- 1 Open your camera and point your device at the QR code.
- 2 Wait for the camera to recognize and scan QR code.
- 3 Click the banner that appears on your screen.

Church QR Code

Wish you could get up-to-date announcements from the church and sign-up right from your smart phone? Now you can! Follow the 3 easy steps on the left to see what this week's announcements are as well as links to sign up for our upcoming events.

Interactive Service

While our Rock City ministry was on pause during the pandemic, we created an Interactive Service for our families. It has been a joy worshipping, playing, and interacting in worship together! Here are a few quotes from those that have been a part of it.



My kids just love the instruments and the interactive lesson along with getting to sit with family. Kind of the best of both worlds. Kolbey looks forward to playing games and the end too. -Arnett Family

My family liked the variety of the Interactive service: different speakers each week, and different ways to teach the lesson in a way the kids understand. The service kept the boys engaged for the whole time and they enjoyed participating! We also liked that it was a very friendly and relaxed atmosphere. – Sykora Family



I really like the music and activities during the service. I also enjoy watching and participating in the skits. – Jovie Cranmer

It was really fun for me because I got to play in the band and be around kids my own age. – Ruth Jones

You've Been Egged!

By Tiffany Jones

You've Been Egged was a huge success! This year sure had its challenges, but it's also had many unexpected blessings. There were 36 children that received a surprise egg hunt on their lawn, which also included a bag of crafts! Over the weekend before Easter, volunteers hide eggs in backyards while the kids were away. One egg hunt was for a little girl who, when she arrived home from the hospital, was overwhelmed with the excitement of the surprise! Hopefully with the end of the pandemic in sight, we will be back to our large group egg hunts at church. I will look back on this event with fondness as I hope the children will too. A huge thank you to the volunteers who made this a success! Without your willingness to help, it wouldn't have been possible.



Meet Our Newest Staff

Our church recently added three new staff members to our ministry team. You may already recognize them, as they are familiar faces. However, we thought this would be a great time for you to get to know them more!



Hannah Tiell – Rock City Assistant

- In a nutshell, what does your new role on staff involve? *My new staff role at LUMC involves working alongside Tiffany to serve our young children and families that are a part of Rock City!*
- What are you most looking forward to about your new role in ministry? *I graduated with an Early and Special Education degree, so I'm very excited to be able to teach not only during the week at my job, but also get to serve in teaching and assisting teachers here in our church. I am looking forward to working with your children to grow their love for Jesus and others! I have always loved working with young students and have been a children's ministry intern during college, so I'm really excited to be a part of making Rock City happen!*
- What are you passionate about? *I'm passionate about young people (hence my career choice as a teacher!), traveling, and ice cream! I always love trying new things, and I love meeting new people!*
- What's the last book you've read? *I don't usually have a lot of time to pick up a book and read, but I do try to stay current on things my students are reading. I'm working through I Wasn't Lucky, I Was Blessed, and it's about a Columbus principal who grew up in the city and overcame great odds to be where he is in life today.*
- What's your favorite hymn? *My favorite hymn would have to be "The Old Rugged Cross". My parents would always sing hymns with us before we went to sleep when we were little, and that one was always my favorite. It still brings tears to my eyes when I hear it!*
- Do you have a favorite Bible verse? If so, what is it? *My Bible verse tends to change based on the season of life I'm in, but one that I cling to over the years is Psalm 61:2, "When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the Rock that is higher than I." It brings me back into focus when I'm feeling overwhelmed or out of control. It reminds me that I'm not in control anyway 😊*
- What is your favorite family tradition? *My favorite family tradition is cinnamon rolls on Sunday morning. My mom and dad always made sweet and warm cinnamon rolls before church!!*

Natalyn Landis – Nursery Care Coordinator

- In a nutshell, what does your new role on staff involve? *As the Nursery Care Coordinator, it will be my responsibility to ensure a fun, safe, and spiritually fulfilling space for the youngest members of our church family.*
- What are you most looking forward to about your new role in ministry? *I'm incredibly excited to grow with a whole new generation of our church and walk with them in the earliest steps of their journey.*
- What are you passionate about? *I'm very passionate about loving and caring for children. That passion has extended to my job and my family, so it's very much a part of my everyday life.*
- What's the last book you've read? *The last book I read was The ONE Thing: The Surprisingly Simple Truth Behind Extraordinary Results.*
- What's your favorite hymn? *My favorite worship song is "Thy Will" by Hillary Scott and the Scott Family.*
- Do you have a favorite Bible verse? If so, what is it? *Yes, Jeremiah 29:11*
- What is your favorite family tradition? *My favorite family tradition is matching Christmas PJs!*



“Meet Our New Staff” continued from page 4.



Michael Whetstone – Safety Coordinator

- In a nutshell, what does your new role on staff involve? *As the Safety Coordinator, my role is to restart the idled LUMC safety program, train volunteers, and ensure the plan is up-to-date. In addition, I will coordinate all the scheduling of the Sunday safety monitors. My most important role is to keep the congregation informed relative to execution of safety plan and changes along the way.*

- What are you most looking forward to about your new role in ministry? *Meeting more members of our congregation.*
- What are you passionate about? *Ensuring that I give plenty of attention to my family.*
- What’s the last book you’ve read? *From Eve to Dawn, A History of Woman by Marilyn French.*
- What’s your favorite hymn? *“River in Judea”*
- Do you have a favorite Bible verse? If so, what is it? *I love to read the book of James. Short and to the point. Easy to understand and full of common-sense ways to live your life.*
- What is your favorite family tradition? *Labor Day at Lakeside with the whole family.*

Be sure to introduce yourself to Hannah, Natalyn, and Michael the next time you see them. We are blessed to have them as part of our church family!



George Tootle, one of our amazing volunteers!

Safety Team

By Michael Whetstone

In early 2020, LUMC started a rollout of the church’s Safety Plan. Then the pandemic hit and on-site services were stopped. Jump ahead 12 months, and as we started our Sunday morning re-opening, Pastor Alex has asked us to restart rollout of the safety plan. Our first step in this plan took place on April 11 when Rock City re-started. A safety monitor was on duty for the 11:00 Rock City service. Their role in this first phase of the rollout is to actively monitor activities in the education wing and in the narthex. Each of the Rock City teachers have a radio in their room, go-bags with emergency items as well as “action sheets” with instructions to follow for the teachers. Safety Monitors also have the radio and “action sheet” instructions. The safety monitor is on duty to assure the safety of the children and teachers.



FINANCE FOCUS

Financial data thru April 30, 2021

Fund Balances

General	\$107,468
Building	\$4,600
Planned Replacement	\$78,194
Endowment	\$ 57,251
Other Designated Funds	\$ 33,867

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

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	Apr-21	YTD 2021
Contributions	38,061	148,051
Expenses	31,956	139,418
Difference	6,105	8,633

- YTD 2021 General Fund contributions have decreased 0.5% compared to 2020.

Building Fund Activity

Building Fund Income for April 2021 = \$1,539

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, Memorials, and Youth.

Questions or Comments? Contact Amy Bratton, LUMC Treasurer
amy@lithopolisumc.org or 614-271-6242