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PASTOR

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OFFICE STAFF
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The deadline for the January issue of the Messenger is noon on Thursday, December 19. Email articles to Lauren.Lanigan@lenexaumc.org.

The Messenger is available online, or you may pick up a copy at church. If you would like a copy mailed to you, please contact the church office.
Pastor’s Corner

Just think! Over 2,000 years since Jesus came to Earth from heaven, we are still celebrating His birthday. We wonder how long it will be until He comes again. Growing up, my children looked forward to watching Santa’s Workshop on television. Santa was featured telling stories about the flying reindeer and life at the North Pole and reading letters from the children.

One letter stands out after all these years. The letter began with the usual request for toys and continued with how the child prayed to Santa every night. Santa read the letter with great care and then gently put it down on the table beside his chair. He said that he was honored to receive the letter and he would forward the request to the elves preparing the list for Christmas Eve.

He went on to say that he was not a “god” who was deserving of being addressed in a person’s prayer. He further explained that he was a servant of the one God, just like many other people. He encouraged the writer to continue the bedtime prayers and to address them to the one God. Some years later, I saw a statute of the red-suited Santa Claus kneeling beside the manger of the Christ child. His hat was on the ground, his head was bowed, and his hands were folded in prayer. I instantly remembered the letter read on Santa’s Workshop and how Santa Claus said to the viewing audience that he was “a servant of the one God.” O, Lord, our God, help us to always remember that Jesus is the reason for the Christmas Season. Amen!

A blessed Advent and Christmas to you.

Ezekiel Koech

Pastor Ezekiel Koech
LUMC FINANCIAL UPDATE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Operating Fund Contributions Received October 2019</td>
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<td>Building Use, Fundraising and Other Income Received</td>
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<td>Income from Bequest</td>
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<td>Total Operating Income Received October 2019</td>
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<td>Mission Shares Paid October 2019</td>
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<td>Budgeted Mission Shares Year to Date</td>
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<td>Total 2019 Mission Shares</td>
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Education Building Debt Report

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<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tr>
<td>Balance Due on Education Building Loan 10/31/19</td>
<td>$139,503</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amount Remaining on Capital Campaign Pledges</td>
<td>$63,970</td>
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<td>Gap</td>
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Capital Campaign Update

$139,503.33...as of October 30, this is the amount of outstanding debt left on our education building. As a congregation, we have been paying down this debt for over 10 years! Could 2020 be the year we eliminate it? It’s up to all of us to make that happen. Of the $5,514.22 monthly payment, over $5,100 is now paid against the principal, and the balance is interest. Before the end of 2019, please do what you can to help us reduce it by paying off your pledge, by making an additional year-end gift, or by making a new gift.

In early 2020, our congregation will vote on remodeling our kitchen in Schneeberger Hall. We desperately need to update the 60-year-old kitchen for a variety of reasons. Before we take that project on, however, we need to have our current debt on the education building eliminated—or made as small as possible. Thank you for your generosity!

Advent and Christmas Eve Offerings

The Finance Committee has designated this year’s Advent and Christmas Eve offerings to support the Pastor’s Discretionary Agape Fund. This fund is used to assist members of our congregation in times of crisis. There are special offering envelopes in the pews that you may use for your donation or you may mark your check (payable to Lenexa UMC) “Advent”. You may also give online at lenexaumc.org/online-giving/.
DECEMBER 1 | 1st SUNDAY OF ADVENT
“What’s It Going To Take?”
*Isaiah 2:1–5*

DECEMBER 8 | 2nd SUNDAY OF ADVENT
“All God’s Family”
*Matthew 1:1–12, Isaiah 11:1–10*
Christ wants us to be a part of God’s family by following his teachings and examples—helping others just as we would help those in our own family. Dave Glisson preaching. Tree of Life Praise Band at 9:00. Growing in Grace Children’s Choir and Chancel Choir at 10:30.

DECEMBER 15 | 3rd SUNDAY OF ADVENT
“Down In My Heart”
*Isaiah 35:1–10, John 15:7–11* (9:00 a.m.)
We are always in pursuit of happiness, but it is temporary, fleeting, and based on external circumstances. True inward joy comes from a consistent relationship with Christ, which is deep and permanent. However, finding that joy requires a decision by you. Tammy Shepherd preaching at 9:00. Tree of Life Praise Band at 9:00. Chancel Choir cantata with lessons and carols at 10:30.

DECEMBER 22 | 4th SUNDAY OF ADVENT
*Matthew 1:18–25*
Matthew 1:18–25 gives us the reason for Christmas. Verse 21 explains exactly what Jesus came to do. It says, “She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” In Jesus, we have the solution for our sin. He went to the cross with our sins, and he rose from the dead to give us new life. Jesus is the solution for our sin problem. Jesus came to save us from our sins when were not even expecting him. He broke into our space. Pastor Ezekiel preaching. Tree of Life Praise Band at 9:00. Praise Bells at 9:00. Celebration Bells at 10:30. Joy Bells at both services.

5:00 P.M.—SANCTUARY: scripture, carols, communion, and our Christmas Eve skit, Joy Story: The Gift of a New Beginning
7:00 P.M.—SANCTUARY: scripture, carols, communion, candlelight, brass quartet, Chancel Choir, and Rev. Ezekiel Koech preaching
11:00 P.M.—THE UNDERGROUND: scripture, carols, communion, candlelight, and Rev. Ezekiel Koech preaching

DECEMBER 29 | 1st SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS | TIME CAPSULE DEDICATION
*Matthew 2:1–12*
The gospel of Matthew discusses the Magi, saying they had been following a star they saw in the East. In verse 9 and 10, we read: “After they had heard the king, they went on their way and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was and saw Jesus face to face.” From a human point of view, the Magi’s story has allegorical and superstition aspects to it like many other stories. The point here is, let’s emulate the Magi. Not only did they accomplish their mission, but they also showed total allegiance to King Jesus. God is pleased when you bring your various gifts to Him—your material gifts, your talents and abilities, your whole person, and your whole life as a sacrifice of service and worship. Pastor Ezekiel preaching. Tree of Life Praise Band at 9:00.
CHILDREN’S MINISTRIES

join us for sunday school!

9:00 A.M.
Nursery: Birth–3 years old
Kid’s Kingdom: 4 years old–6th grade

10:30 A.M.
Nursery: Birth–3 years old
Kids Connect: 4 years old–6th grade

On the first Sunday of each month, Kids Connect stays in the sanctuary for the 10:30 a.m. service to experience worship and communion. In Kid’s Kingdom at 9:00 a.m., we will be studying the Journey to Bethlehem during December. Kids Connect at 10:30 a.m. participates in learning activities tied to the week’s scripture lesson from the church service.

upcoming events

ADVENT WORKSHOP
Wednesday, December 4 | 5:30–6:30 p.m. | Schneeberger Hall

Come to Dinner’s On Us on December 4 for our Advent Workshop. There will be gingerbread-house-making for kids and a spaghetti dinner for all. Come join us to get in the holiday spirit!

FAMILY MATTERS

A new ministry for families of kids (birth–6th grade) will launch in January! Family Matters will meet once a month—usually on the 4th Sunday from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.—for lunch followed by an activity. We will alternate each month between a family bonding activity for parents and kids to participate in together and splitting out to have a guest speaker or discussion group for parents and separate activities for kids. Mark your calendars for the following dates and RSVP to Mary.Clow@lenexaumc.org so we know how many to expect.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 19 | Family “Minute To Win It” Games
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23 | Parent Group: “Keeping Your Cool When Parenting Raises Your Blood Pressure” with Tammy Shepherd
SUNDAY, MARCH 22 | Family Scavenger Hunt
SUNDAY, APRIL 26 | Parent Group Topic TBD
SUNDAY, MAY 31 | Family Activity TBD

CHRISTMAS CAROLING
Wednesday, December 18 | 5:30 p.m. | Lakeview Village

This church-wide event is a great activity for families. More info on page 10.
events for December

**Sunday, December 1 | 5:00 p.m.**

**HUNGRY HUNGRY HIPPOS**

**Sunday, December 8 | 5:00 p.m.**

**CHRISTMAS MOVIE NIGHT**

**Sunday, December 15 | 5:00 p.m.**

**ANNUAL WHITE ELEPHANT GIFT EXCHANGE**

Locate something at home and wrap it up—this is sure to be a blast!

**Sunday, December 22 | 3:30 p.m.**

**LUMYOUTH SERVE AT RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE**

We will meet at LUMC, leave for Ronald McDonald House at 3:30, and plan to return by 7:30.

**Sunday, December 29**

—NO LUMYOUTH—

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**confirmation starting soon!**

Confirmation class for youth begins in January! 7th–12th graders who would like to be confirmed should contact Mary Clow at Mary.Clow@lenexaumc.org for more information.
“And what I say to you I say to all: 
Keep awake.”  
MARK 13:37, NRSV

We begin celebrating the season of Advent on December 1 and continue until Christmas Eve. In the church, Advent is the mark of the new liturgical year. This new church year begins as we are wrapping up the past calendar year. While we are reflecting upon the goals, resolutions, failures and successes of the year, the church begins waiting for the coming of Christ to Earth.

During Advent, we remember the humble beginnings of Jesus as a baby born among animals, laid in a manger and welcomed by shepherds. We wait for this humble king in the midst of a Christmas season filled with excess, the busy commotion of the shopping malls, and holiday parties loud enough to drown out the humble arrival of Jesus.

During Advent, we remember the promise of Jesus coming again, this time entering this world in glory and with majesty. In Advent, we wait for the Savior King to set the captive free and to bring justice and peace. Whether the injustices of this world have left us numb or powerless, the coming Savior is the hope of making all things right.

During Advent, we remember that Jesus is waiting on us. He is waiting for us to follow him, making room for him to come into our hearts and lives each day.

UNITED METHODIST STUDENT DAY

We will celebrate United Methodist Student Day on December 1. The special offering received on United Methodist Student Day supports scholarships given to United Methodist students from diverse backgrounds to help them prepare for life by adding knowledge to their faith.
Lenexa UMC has two part-time job openings. We are currently in need of the following:

**LEAD CUSTODIAN** for building services. This staff opportunity is a 20-hour-a-week position. Duties include:

- Standard cleaning—empty trash, vacuum, dust, and clean windows and bathrooms for both buildings.
- Setup—set tables and chairs for all church, preschool and guest events.
- Maintaining supplies—keep track of towels, toilet paper and cleaning supplies. Order as needed.
- Building maintenance—fix toilet valves and flapper, change light bulbs, change paper towel dispenser batteries, change furnace filters. Coordinate outside vendor for carpet cleaning and floor polish. Major paint projects are typically done by volunteers.
- Candidate needs to be able to lift at least 40 lbs. to handle trash and move tables.

**YOUTH DIRECTOR** to provide spiritual and relational Christian leadership for youth in the 7th through 12th grades. This staff opportunity is approximately 20 hours per week. The Director of Youth Ministries will work with the Church Leadership Team and will provide the primary leadership for youth programming, along with adult volunteers. This will include weekly youth meetings, regularly scheduled classes (Sunday School, Confirmation, etc.); worship inclusion, fellowship programs, and service projects that will include district and conference activities and events.

Responsibilities:

- Grow the youth ministry by creating an attractive, vibrant, and compelling environment to which our youth can invite and attract others to the church.
- Build and support a team of passionate adult volunteers who provide diverse ability to lead, coach and mentor youth.
- Challenge the youth to respond to God’s call to serve in their communities and the world.
- Build a ministry that engages with local middle and high schools in the area and connects with the youth in their activities.
- Love youth for who they are and where they are in their faith journey.

Qualifications:

- Hold a bachelor’s degree in a related field.
- Have a vision and demonstrated ability to plan, develop, coordinate, manage and implement a youth ministry.
- Possess excellent written and verbal communication skills, conflict management skills, and computer skills.
- Demonstrate an ability to work effectively with youth, diverse individuals, and teams of volunteers.
- Previous experience leading a youth ministry program is desired.

If you are interested in either position, contact Cathy Boyd at cathyboyd5310@gmail.com or (913) 707–8761.
CHRISTMAS CAROLING

Wednesday, December 18 | 5:30 p.m. | Lakeview Village

Everyone is invited to sing Christmas carols for the residents of Eastside Terrace at Lakeview Village. We will meet at LUMC by the west doors of the main building at 5:30 p.m. to carpool to Lakeview. We will return to the church around 6:30 p.m. and have pulled pork, cookies, and hot chocolate. Let Mary Clow know if you are planning to attend at Mary.Clow@lenexaumc.org.

THE LOWDOWN UNDERGROUND

Thursday, December 19
7:00 p.m. | The Underground

The holiday season can be wonderful, magical, sad, stressful, and overwhelming (just to name a few things). We invite you to join us on December 19 for an evening of silence, calmness, and reflection. Once attendees enter the Underground, talking will not be allowed. You are invited to find a place to sit, journal on the provided pages, pray, meditate, or close your eyes and just be. The Underground Collective will begin playing at 7 p.m. and will continue to play for the entirety of the service. It is our hope that this evening of reflection and music provides the opportunity for peace, quiet, and relaxation in this final push to the holidays. This series is open to all members of the congregation and community. Join us in the Underground for fellowship, music, and coffee!

RISE! CALLED TO HOLINESS: WOMEN’S RETREAT

Wednesday, January 22 | 9 a.m.–3:15 p.m. | Wesley Room

RISE! Called to Holiness is a spiritual retreat focused on encouraging women to RISE (Realize Inspired, Spiritual Enlightenment) through holiness. Have you ever wondered “What IS holiness? Is it something I do or something I become? Is it compatible with my crazy-busy lifestyle? Will it bring spiritual enlightenment? And what does “spiritual enlightenment” mean?” Through engaging talks, quiet reflection, journaling, and small group sharing, this retreat will explore the concept of holiness and how to fully express it in our everyday lives. Presented by professional speakers Cathy Newton and Candy Whirley. No charge for retreat/handouts/materials. $10.00 fee for lunch (taco salad bar) payable at door. Registration and beverages start at 8:45 a.m. Seating is limited—sign up by January 10, 2020. To register, contact Linda Stokes at Linda.Stokes@lenexaumc.org.

THANKS, MANFRED!

After at least 15 years of leadership as an usher at LUMC, Manfred Wehrly is retiring from that service. We would like to publicly thank Manfred (and Dorothy) for all his good work. We were all blessed by his help over the years. Our team—Erik Troy, Steve Lanigan, and Bill Stoker—will miss having Manfred with us every second Sunday, but we were lucky to have him as a teammate. If you get a chance, stop Manfred to shake his hand and thank him for his service to LUMC.
CHRISTMASTIME AT SUNFLOWER ELEMENTARY

Your generosity through kettle corn purchases and the clothing drive raised $1,200 that will be used to help make Christmas a bit merrier for six families at Sunflower Elementary School. A big “thank you” to everyone who participated in those projects! The Sunflower Educational Support Team has put a Christmas tree outside of Wesley that is loaded with gift requests from teachers for their classrooms at Sunflower Elementary. We hope you’ll take this opportunity to support the teachers by choosing a paper ornament, purchasing the gift listed, and placing the unwrapped item underneath the tree. Mark the cost of the gift on the ornament and attach it to the gift. No need to include your name. Thank you for sharing your Christmas spirit with these deserving teachers!

CHRISTMAS CAROL TRADITIONS FROM AMERICA’S COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Every Sunday through Christmas, join Barbara Pendleton in the Wesley Room as she takes us to some of the most memorable Christmas concerts in America. Learn about some of the most meaningful traditions of the season and how they came to be. Presentations will be at 9 a.m. and again at 10:10 a.m. and are designed to be only 10-15 minutes long. The schedule is as follows:

DECEMBER 1: Wellesley College (Boston) and Rollins College (Orlando)
DECEMBER 8: Morehouse College and Spelman College (both Atlanta)
DECEMBER 15: Moravian College (Bethlehem, PA)
DECEMBER 22: St. Olaf College (Northfield, MN)

SALTY PEANUTS ADULT MISSION TRIP

At the November organizational meeting, prospective SALTY PEANUTS shared in lively discussion of possible projects. They will begin with their March 25–28 mission trip to the Oklahoma City area to work in disaster relief. Participation fee will be $200 per person. On top of that, the group is also interested in taking on projects locally as well as here at LUMC. SALTY PEANUTS will meet again on Sunday, December 15 in the Wesley Room at 11:30 a.m. to continue the conversations and plan further. All who are interested are invited to join in.
All are welcome to join one or more of these great classes!

**SPECTRUM**
*9:00 a.m. | Room 122*
Spectrum class is studying the Light of the World: A Beginner’s Guide to Advent by Amy-Jill Levine.

**FOUNDATIONS**
*9:00 a.m. | Room 105*
Foundations Class will be studying the Justin Coleman series “Home for Christmas: Tales of Hope & Second Chances”. This study brings inspiring stories of hope to show how the light of Christmas shines brightly, even in hard times.

**PATHFINDERS**
*9:00 a.m. | Asbury Room*
Pathfinders selects current issues in the news or other contemporary topics for discussion. We debate how these issues should be addressed in light of scripture and our Christian faith. In December, Pathfinders will be studying Christmas Through the Eyes of Joseph by Adam Hamilton.

**PULSE**
*10:30 a.m. | Room 105*

**DASHERS**
*10:30 a.m. | Asbury Room*
After experiencing 9:00 a.m. worship, we reflect on the day’s service through lively and thoughtful conversation. Someone often brings something from the editorial page for discussion, and we apply our faith walk to the topic at hand as we share our opinions. We know our date of birth, and don’t know the day we will die, but we’re doing our best to fill the dash.

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**PRESCHOOL NEWS**

Winter is upon us, Christmas is near, and the kids are excited! December is a month that we happily look forward to each year, and the children will be celebrating the birth of Jesus with many fun activities in the classroom. Our Pre-K and TK students will be sharing their musical talents with their families this month during our annual December Songfest.

Enrollment for the 2019-2020 school year will begin in January. Please contact the preschool office at (913) 888–6300 if you would like information about our wonderful program. Wishing you and yours a joyous Christmas season!