

*the*  
**MESSENGER**

a publication of Lenexa United Methodist Church | January 2021

***Happy  
New Year!***



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**catch our worship livestream  
every Sunday at 9 & 10:30 am!**

[facebook.com/lenexaumc/live](https://facebook.com/lenexaumc/live)

The deadline for the February issue of the Messenger is noon on **Wednesday, January 20.**

Email articles to [Lauren.Lanigan@lenexaumc.org](mailto:Lauren.Lanigan@lenexaumc.org).

The Messenger is available online or at church. If you'd like a copy mailed to you, please contact the church office.

# PASTOR'S CORNER



## *Happy New Year!*

What is 2021 going to bring? 2020 has been a very rough and unusual year all over the world because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Hardship, separation, and loss have revealed a new sense of hope, community, resilience, and gratitude for blessings large and small.

With the vaccine that has come out, we now have a lot of hope that we are going to triumph over COVID-19. Thank God for the science and scientists. The vaccine has already arrived at our local hospitals, and we have hope that before long, everyone will be able to get it. However, uncertainty is still with us as we think about what the outcome of General Conference 2021 might be. It will take place on August 29–September 7, 2021 at the Minneapolis Convention Center. During the second week of the advent study led by Andy Oren, we saw in Matthew 2:13–15 an example of fear, doubt, and uncertainty for Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus. The gospel of Matthew chapter 2 also mentions that the wise men—Magi, three kings, whatever you want to call them—left after sharing gifts and the message they had heard about Jesus. Joseph is then warned to pack up and leave immediately for Egypt. How were they going to make ends meet, who did they know in Egypt, and where were they going to live? I am sure all of these thoughts came to mind as Joseph did as he was told. But deep down he listened to the messenger, led his family to safety, and continued to be a parent.

I can say I know what it's like to be a parent. Parents will do almost anything to guard their children from danger. They will not risk the lives of their children. I know that God, too, cares about all of us, and that means that we, too, are called to care about one another. So, while we may not know what the outcomes of GC 2021 will be, we can live into what God has called us to do. Share the good news with great joy that a savior has been born in the city of David. We all have an opportunity to remember that the birth of a child in the city of David changed it all for every person who has heard the message.

So, as we start this new year, let us all commit to loving one another. Let us put our trust in God, and let us continue to share the good news of great joy that the birth of Jesus brought into the world. Each year starts with new and fresh opportunities. As we think about our new year's resolutions, let us also be willing to step outside our comfort zones and listen to one another.

A lot of our New Year's resolutions focus on our wellbeing, be it improving our physical health or getting our finances in order. I also hope that you've made a resolution for your spiritual improvement, because it is part of your wellbeing. I have been praying and thinking about the resolution of our church in 2021. Of course, we have a mission statement and vision. It is on the bulletin every Sunday. If you haven't read it, please do so. SPONGE (spirituality, participation, outreach, numbers, giving, and enthusiasm) lists areas we need to grow in. Therefore, we need a strategy to get to where we are supposed to go. Since we all have a part to play in the mission of our church, I came up with a core group among our church members. The Great Plains Conference has assigned a coach to help our core group with a discussion on how we can achieve our vision. We have already started our discussion on the wellbeing of our church in 2021, and we came up with some questions that can go into a survey called Readiness 360. For more information, please make time to read [www.readiness360.org](http://www.readiness360.org).

Shalom!

Pastor Ezekiel

## FINANCIAL UPDATE

General Operating Fund Contributions Received November 2020 .....	\$27,258
Employee Retention Credit Received .....	\$11,287
Building Use, Fundraising and Other Income Received .....	\$223
Income from Bequest .....	\$1,250
Total Operating Income Received November 2020 .....	\$40,018
Mission Shares Paid November 2020 .....	\$4,257
Mission Shares Paid Year to Date .....	\$38,307
2020 Mission Shares .....	\$51,075
Mission Shares Forgiven By the Conference .....	\$8,512
Adjusted 2020 Mission Shares .....	\$42,563

## GIVING ALTERNATIVES

In-person worship is currently suspended, but there are several options for giving your tithes and offerings to the church. You may support the operating budget, kitchen project, special offerings, and any of the many causes we give to in any of these ways:

- Mail a check to LUMC at 9138 Caenen Lake Road, Lenexa, KS 66215. Designate the desired fund(s) in the memo line.
- Give online. Go to [lenexaumc.org/online-giving](http://lenexaumc.org/online-giving) for information and the link to give online.
- Give via mobile app. Download the ShelbyNext Giving App on your smart phone and search for "Lenexa United Methodist Church." Follow the instructions to make a one-time or recurring gift.
- Give via text. Text the amount you would like to give to (913) 444-5960.
- Use your bank's Online Bill Pay to have your bank mail a check to the church.

## GIVE JUST BY SHOPPING ONLINE!

Are you shopping online because of the COVID-19 pandemic? There are two ways to support the church while doing so.

**#1: UMCMarket (powered by iGive):** Donate while you shop at hundreds of your favorite retailers. The church will receive a percentage of the amount you spend, plus you'll receive exclusive offers and instant savings. It's easy and a win-win!

1. register at [umcmarket.org](http://umcmarket.org).
2. select Lenexa United Methodist Church to receive your donations.
3. download the iGive button. This is optional, but it guarantees you'll never miss a chance to make a donation when shopping at a participating merchant.

**#2: Amazon Smile:** If purchasing from Amazon, start your shopping at [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com). Choose Lenexa United Methodist Church as your favorite charity and LUMC will earn 0.5% on your purchases. Save the link <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/48-0845671> and all your purchases will support LUMC! You can use your Amazon Prime account and still benefit the church.

## the education building is paid off!

Thank you, thank you, thank you!!!! As of 12-15-2020, LUMC no longer has any outstanding debt on our education building! Our 14-year, multi-million-dollar capital campaign is behind us. When we voted to remodel the kitchen in 2019, some in our congregation were concerned about incurring new debt when we still had over \$130,000 of debt on the education building. That concern is gone, and we can concentrate on funding the kitchen remodel, which has been well funded to date, and we know will continue to be supported financially in 2021 when construction begins. We want to thank those of you who served on various capital campaign committees. We thank God for the inspiration he gave hundreds of you to make the generous gifts you have made to support our preschool, church, and mission. God Bless you all! — Daryl Roller, Capital Campaign Chair

Note: any future donations marked "building fund" will go to the kitchen remodel project.



## WORDS ON WORSHIP

**JANUARY 3** | EPIPHANY SUNDAY

### *"The Magis' Visit To Jesus"*

**Matthew 2:1–12.** Just as the star led the wise men to Jesus, God, by His Holy Spirit, is leading you to Jesus. Second, we can bring others to Him to experience the salvation that only He offers. Rev. Ezekiel Koech preaching. **Communion Sunday:** You can either supply your own bread and juice for worship at home or pick up prepackaged communion elements at the church. Elements can be picked up at the office or during Dinner's On Us on Wednesday, December 30, 5:30–6:30 p.m.

**JANUARY 10** | 1<sup>st</sup> SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

### *"The Baptism of Jesus"*

**Mark 1:4–13.** Jesus' baptism marked the beginning of his ministry. Our baptism is also an ordination of sorts. We make vows to serve God and God's world with love and justice. After Jesus' baptism, The Holy Spirit took Him into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan. Our work as baptized Christians won't be easy either. As we seek to establish God's justice and peace on earth, we will battle the demons of hatred, racism, sexism, ignorance, oppression, etc. Rev. Ezekiel Koech preaching.

**JANUARY 17** | 2<sup>nd</sup> SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

### *"There Is a Necessity To Look For Nathanael"*

**John 1:43–51.** The Gospel of John is regarded as the book of love. After John encountered the love of Jesus, it changed his life—and apparently his approach to life—which he demonstrated in all his writings. John 1:45 says that Philip found Nathanael. Take note of the word "found". That means Philip was looking for him. Nathanael is that next soul you need to win to Christ, which I call your Nathanael project. I challenge you to start your Nathanael project in the new year. Rev. Ezekiel Koech preaching.

**JANUARY 24** | 3<sup>rd</sup> SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

### *"Fishers of People"*

**Mark 1:14–20.** The message from this story in Mark's Gospel is that Jesus does not always take us the way we expected to go. That's OK, though, because we are safe in the loving arms of God. Perhaps this year, we can all give some thought and prayer to how we might re-commit ourselves as followers of Jesus and re-commit ourselves to the mission and ministry of our church family here at Lenexa UMC. Rev. Ezekiel Koech preaching.

**JANUARY 31** | 4<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

### *"Are You Still Amazed At Jesus' Doings?"*

**Mark 1:21–28.** Verse 27 says that people were amazed at what Jesus was doing. So how in the world can the story of Jesus ever capture the attention of mankind again? It must start with you and me. If we are not amazed by what God has done and is doing, they may never stop to listen to His voice. Rev. Ezekiel Koech preaching.

*Participate in Sunday worship from home in any of these ways!*

#### **#1: LIVESTREAM**

At 9:00 or 10:30, you can watch the worship service live at [facebook.com/lenexaumc/live](https://www.facebook.com/lenexaumc/live). You do not need a Facebook account to be able to watch. If you go to the website before the video has started, it will not automatically show up when worship begins. You will need to refresh the webpage for the video to load.

#### **#2: WATCH LATER**

The videos from both worship services are posted each week on our church website at [lenexaumc.org/online-services/](https://www.lenexaumc.org/online-services/). They are posted shortly after worship ends on Sunday morning and are available to watch anytime during the week. Videos are left on this page for at least 3 months, so you can go back and watch previous weeks if you missed them or want to watch them again.

#### **#3: LISTEN TO A CD RECORDING**

If you don't have internet access available or would prefer to listen on CD, we have audio recordings of the 9:00 and 10:30 A.M. services available on CD. Contact the church office at [office@lenexaumc.org](mailto:office@lenexaumc.org) and we can mail you CDs every week.

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# small groups for adults at LUMC

## **PATHFINDERS**

Pathfinders is an adult Sunday school class which meets Sunday mornings from 9–10 a.m. Since March, we have been meeting by Zoom only and are averaging about 16 attendees each week. We have been doing a 5-week Advent Study and have not settled on January programming at this time. For the Zoom link to join us, contact Keith Stokes at [keith@mightymac.org](mailto:keith@mightymac.org).

## **FOUNDATIONS**

Foundations Sunday School Class meets at 9:00 a.m. on Sundays to discuss thought-provoking questions and support each other on our faith journey. The class is named for the foundation that Christ provides in our life. In January, we will be studying Adam Hamilton's book and DVD study titled "Unafraid", exploring the worries and anxieties that most of us experience. Contact Tammy Shepherd at [shepherd.tammy@yahoo.com](mailto:shepherd.tammy@yahoo.com) for the Zoom link.

## **DASHERS**

Dashers meets every Sunday at 10:15 in the Wesley Room and via Zoom. We typically have 8 to 10 people in person and via Zoom combined. Lately, we have focused on bible study using the methodology outlined by Bill and Marjorie Power. Each passage is read from multiple translations and discussed in terms of what the passage tastes, smells and feels like, as well as what it tells us about God, the human condition and our relationship with God and each other. Finally, the question is posed as to what we will do differently, having better understood the passage. Recently, we've looked at the scriptures used in the advent services. After the first of the year, we plan to study the sermon on the Mount using this same methodology. If you're interested in joining, contact Dave Glisson at [daveglisskc@gmail.com](mailto:daveglisskc@gmail.com).

## **LADIES BOOKCLUB**

Linda Stoker is the facilitator of the Ladies Bookclub at LUMC. We meet monthly on the third Wednesday at noon, currently on Zoom but normally in person at the church. There are between 5 to 8 members, but we welcome other attendees, and church membership is not necessary. We usually choose books several months ahead of time and include both fiction and non-fiction books of all genres. The Ladies Bookclub will meet on Zoom on January 20 at noon. We will revisit and discuss *At Home in Mitford* by Jan Karon, an oldie but a goodie! Contact Linda Stoker at [lstoker98@gmail.com](mailto:lstoker98@gmail.com) to be included in the link!

## **CHRISTCARE**

The Friends and Followers ChristCare group currently meets on the 4th Thursday of each month via Zoom. The group is a caring, confidential circle of friends with Christ at the center where the ups and downs of life can be shared in a safe environment. After catching up with joys, concerns, and activities of the past month, we share a brief devotion together. For more information or to join, contact Linda Stokes at [lindalipp@gmail.com](mailto:lindalipp@gmail.com).

## **DINNER'S ON US OUTREACH**

Lisa Freeman coordinates the group of members who serve at and bake cookies for our Wednesday evening drive-thru free dinner. Contact Lisa at [soaringhogs@sbcglobal.net](mailto:soaringhogs@sbcglobal.net) if you'd like to volunteer!

## MOVIE GROUP

Movie Group usually meets on the first Friday of the month at 7 p.m. However, the January meeting will be January 8. When we can gather in person at someone's home, we have pizza, watch a movie, and engage in great fellowship and discussion. Currently, we are gathering via Zoom for fellowship. Contact Tammy Shepherd at [shepherd.tammy@yahoo.com](mailto:shepherd.tammy@yahoo.com) for the Zoom link.

## MEN'S GROUP

The Methodist Men's group held a Zoom meeting on December 12, highlighted by a very interesting presentation on amateur astronomy by Fiske Miles. There were 10 LUMC men in attendance. Anyone interested in receiving notifications about the monthly men's meeting should contact Erik Troy at [troysinks@hotmail.com](mailto:troysinks@hotmail.com), Jay Soper at [jcs@jcsoper.com](mailto:jcs@jcsoper.com), Chuck Sheppard at [shepcr@sbcglobal.net](mailto:shepcr@sbcglobal.net) or call the church office. Meetings are held on Saturday morning once monthly at 8 a.m. The group provides an opportunity for discussions and presentations of interest to Christian men of all ages.

# SPOTLIGHT on WORLDWIDE METHODISM

## — HUMAN RELATIONS DAY —

During the challenges of the past year, we saw how systemic inequality affects the most vulnerable people. When neighbors experience poverty and live in communities that have less access to community resources, we may find ourselves wondering, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"

On Human Relations Day, we have an opportunity to make an impact in communities where people struggle because they don't have the tools or resources to reach their God-given potential.

One of the wonderful aspects of The United Methodist Church is that we can do so much more together than we ever could do on our own. On January 17, we will join other congregations to receive the Human Relations Day Special Sunday offering. Our gifts are part of building beloved community through faith-based volunteer programs, community developers and programs that work with at-risk teens. As society begins to recover from this health and financial crisis, these programs are vital in strengthening communities.

For example, in Chicago, churches are in partnership to engage in community-based alternatives to juvenile incarceration. In the Philippines, community organizations are strengthening family resiliency to address substance abuse, particularly with those who are living in the Manila North Cemetery. And in West Congo, United Methodist Churches are working with ecumenical partners to provide pastoral support and advocacy for children and youth who are in prison.

The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. wrote in his Letter from a Birmingham Jail, "I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be, and you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be."

If, as Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'" Human Relations Day offers a concrete response. Now more than ever, the church is invited to connect with our neighbors, join our resources, and come and see how together we can be the hands and feet of Jesus. Please give generously, trusting that your gifts will be multiplied and "you will see greater things than these." (John 1:50)

## KIDS & FAMILY MINISTRIES

### CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL UPDATE

We will not be resuming in-person Sunday School until we can return to in-person worship. If you would like to receive Sunday School at-home kits starting in January, please sign up on our website at [lenexaumc.org/children](https://lenexaumc.org/children) (if you previously signed up, you don't need to sign up again). Ms. Mary will drop a kit off at your house for each unit (approximately every 3 weeks) with lesson plans and materials for the Sunday School lessons.

You can do the lesson with your kids at whatever time is convenient for you or Ms. Mary will be teaching the lesson over Zoom. We are going to start a trial run of Zoom Sunday School on January 3. It will be each Sunday from 10:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. We will gather on Zoom and Ms. Mary will teach the lesson and lead the activities. If you plan to participate in Zoom Sunday School, please sign up at that link to receive the kits so your kids have the materials for whatever we are doing that day (craft project, game, etc.) Sunday School is geared at kids ages 4 – 5<sup>th</sup> grade, but any kids are welcome to join. Contact [Mary.Clow@lenexaumc.org](mailto:Mary.Clow@lenexaumc.org) for the Zoom link.

## YOUTH GROUP

### YOUTH GROUP UPDATE

LUMY, or “Lenexa United Methodist Youth”, is our group of 6<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> graders! Sunday School usually meets on Sunday mornings in the Loft from 10:30–11:30 a.m., but we are currently pausing Sunday School due to the rise in COVID numbers. We are still meeting on Sunday evenings in Schneeberger Hall from 4–6 p.m. for Youth Group. At Youth Group, we do an activity/game and end with a devotion. Snack Supper is currently on pause due to COVID. Currently, in our Youth Group time, we’re focusing on a series called “Merry Christmas to Me!” In this series, we’re looking at the very first Christmas and how that day was possible through the selflessness, generosity, and sacrifice of God and God’s people. We do some really awesome and fun things throughout the year, too, such as spring and winter retreats, mission trips, conferences, renting out movie theaters, and more! Come join us anytime! Please contact Teila Creekmore if you would like to join or have any questions at [Teila.creekmore@lenexaumc.org](mailto:Teila.creekmore@lenexaumc.org).

**Sunday School** | 10:30 – 11:30 A.M. *(on pause right now)*

**Youth Group** | 4 – 6 P.M.

## YOUNG ADULTS

### YOUNG ADULT CONVERSATIONS | *Sundays* | 10:30 A.M. | *The Underground*

All young adults 18–35 (without kids) are invited to join us for YAC every Sunday morning! Our numbers range from 0 to about 12, and our conversations are always great. We have a stocked refrigerator, as well as hot drinks. Masks are required and social distancing is practiced.