



The Sunbeam

September 2020

LANSING UNITED
Methodist Church

Streaming Worship 9:30 AM

• **PLEASE JOIN Us!**

How good and
pleasant it is
when God's
people live
together in unity

Psalm 133:1 NIV

Pastor: Alison Schmied
Adult Ministries Coordinator: Karen Veaner
Interim Christian Education Coordinator: Debbie Geise
Youth Ministries Coordinator: Krystal Cole

From the Pastor

Lansing United: A Vibrant, Inclusive, Intergenerational Faith Community

What words come to mind when you describe your church?

The letters “LUMC” may easily roll off our tongues, but the letters mean very little to those outside our congregation. It is what we call “insider language”—which makes some people feel included and others know that they are not included.

Lately I’ve been calling our congregation “Lansing United” because togetherness—being united as a faith community—is something that even people who have no experience of what it means to be a United Methodist Christian can immediately understand.

Unity is central to our understanding of who we are as a community of faith. Jesus prayed that his disciples would be unified on earth, just as Christ and God are united:

“Holy Father, you have given me your name; now protect them by the power of your name so that they will be united just as we are.”

—John 17:11b (NLT)

The New Living Translation (NLT) uses the word united, while other translations use the phrase “be one” describing Jesus’ prayer that the togetherness of his followers resembles the relationship between Jesus and God.

The doctrine of the Trinity teaches that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are inseparable, and that no one of the three is a complete representation of how God works in the world. Each person of the Godhead has distinctive attributes, yet they are united in their mission of creating, sustaining, and redeeming the world. This diversity in unity that is God’s own nature is mirrored in Christian community: no one person represents all the particularity of Christ’s followers; the congregation works together to accomplish a shared mission of transformation.

Lansing United is a *vibrant, inclusive, transforming* faith community. I am proud of the ways that Lansing United lives up to those descriptors. Our welcoming statement, adopted by a 98-percent affirmative congregational vote on September 22, 2019, includes the phrase:

“We don’t have to think alike, but we have faith that together we can move forward in God’s love.”



Continued at right

Pastor’s message (concluded)

Our congregation’s unity is not a promise that all of us agree upon a particularly articulated set of cognitive beliefs. Instead, our unity is a unity of practice. We live out our faith as a community of individual believers on our personal faith journeys. We trust that God gives us the ability to work together in spite of our many differences. We commit ourselves to continue to journey together, continually being transformed until we all have the heart and mind of Christ. We continue together on the mission of *transforming* the world until God’s “kin-dom” has been realized on earth as it is in heaven.

Lansing United is *vibrant*. We are alive! We are healthy, and striving to stay healthy. A surprised visitor once said: “There is *joy* here!” Yes, we feel joy when we gather to worship God together. And we miss gathering. Yet, to ensure all are healthy, alive, and vibrant—all of our activities are online.

Lansing United is an *inclusive* faith community. The inclusiveness of God’s grace is central to who we are. God loves not because of who we are or what we’ve done, but because God’s nature is Love. This love is reflected in last year’s overwhelming vote to affirm our Welcome Statement and to join the Reconciling Ministries Network (RMN), working for full inclusion of LGBTQAI+ persons at every level of the denomination and in our own congregation. We strive to be open, affirming, and welcoming to people of every age, race, ethnicity, country of origin, immigration status, gender identity and expression, education level, socio-economic status, and political affiliation.

The Lansing United congregation includes individuals and families, some with and some without children. Our members include youth in high school and young adults in college, empty nesters, and older adults. Remaining inclusive and vibrant requires postponing in-person worship gatherings until *all* can gather together safely. We are limited in the number who may gather, and must encourage all those age 60 years and above to stay home.

Thus, in order to continue being a vibrant, inclusive, intergenerational community, we will continue gathering online for Sunday worship, for administrative meetings, and for faith formation groups.

Thank you for helping keep the Lansing United congregation united as a faith community that is vibrant, inclusive, and intergenerational—even in the midst of a global pandemic. I am grateful for you!

“I always thank my God for you and for the gracious gifts God has given you, now that you belong to Christ Jesus. Through Christ, God has enriched your church in every way—with all of your eloquent words and all of your knowledge.”—1 Corinthians 1: 4-5

Blessings

Pastor Allison

Notes about Online Worship

- (1) Sunday worship is live streamed via Facebook on our website (lansingunited.org) at 9:30 a.m., following a 15-minute prelude. Worship is open to all; no Facebook registration is required. Facebook reports between 200 and 600 viewers of each of Lansing United's weekly worship stream—significantly more than our pre-pandemic attendance average of 140 persons per week. You can also catch the stream on youtube after the live feed.
- (2) Lansing United is committed to inclusivity and offering God's grace to all people. Thus, we will continue the live streaming of worship indefinitely, even when we return to in-person worship. Our commitment to including all people led us to purchase loaner DVD players for those without internet access. We will deliver a DVD player and a recording of the weekly online worship to your home upon request.
- (3) If you would like assistance accessing church activities over the internet, contact the church office (607-533-4070 or office@lansingunited.org). Monday through Friday, Pastoral Administrative Assistant Lonnajean Yoest will answer when possible. If she does not answer, please leave a message. She can help you navigate through the process of accessing on-line content on your computer, phone, or tablet; or requesting the DVD.

Reconciling Statement Anniversary

One year ago this month, LUMC members affirmed that this church welcomes all people. LUMC's welcome is contained in the reconciling statement adopted at that time. Here is that statement, which Pastor Alison cited on page 2.

You are a beloved child of God; there is a place for you at Lansing United Methodist Church. Every person is of sacred worth, created in God's image, and loved equally by God.

As followers of Jesus Christ, we embrace the Methodist spirit and action expressed in "open hearts, open minds, open doors." As a Reconciling Congregation, we celebrate the rich diversity with which God has blessed all people, including all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions. We believe that exclusion is incompatible with Jesus's teachings. We join the Reconciling Ministries Network to work toward the full inclusion of all persons into the church community.

We don't have to think alike, but we have faith that together we can move forward in God's love.

We welcome, affirm, and encourage full participation of people of every age, race, national origin, immigration status, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, marital status or family structure, education or economic background and physical or mental ability.

Come exactly as you are. Your presence enriches us.

—LUMC Welcoming Statement, adopted September 22, 2019

Children's Sunday School Begins!

At this writing, the Lansing Central School District will begin school on either September 21 or 22 with either a hybrid model or virtual instruction. Lansing United Methodist Church will begin our Christian Education on September 27. While there will be no in-person Waffle Breakfast or Sunday School Registration this year, Children's Ministries (PreK-6th grade) will be offering on-line registration and a fun treat delivered to your door to bring the waffle breakfast to you! Stay tuned for more details as they become clear and complete in the coming weeks.—*Debbie Geise*

Blessing of the Chromebooks

The beginning of the school year looks much different this year due to the impact of COVID-19. In the Lansing Central School District, students have the option of using a hybrid model with a combination of in-person and virtual learning or a 100-percent virtual model of learning. So, no matter whether children are venturing to physical school or learning at home, each student will be doing some of their work on a computer or a Chromebook, provided to each student by the district. It is a tradition at LUMC to bless the backpacks of our LUMC kiddos, but as we have experienced throughout 2020, many traditions have had to be altered. This year we will be blessing the Chromebooks that children will be using in this unprecedented time with a "back to school" like no other.



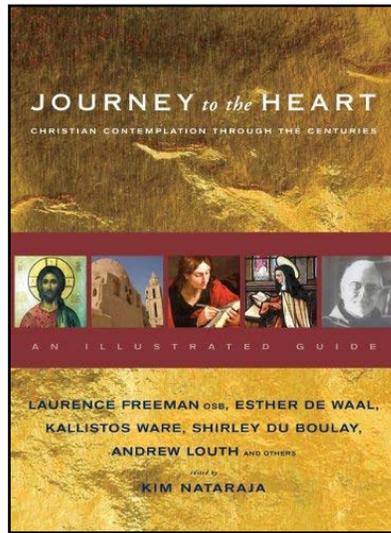
Pastor Alison and Children's Ministries Coordinator, Debbie Geise, will be having a drive-up "Blessing of the Chromebooks" in the church parking lot on Sunday, September 27, at 12:30 p.m. Families can park in the lot that day, and children can have their Chromebooks (or backpacks, if preferred) at their car windows for a special blessing and prayer for the 2020-21 school year. Even though this school year comes with uncertainty and our children may feel unsteady as they begin this totally new venture, God is unchanging and cannot be shaken. And, this unchanging and unshaken God is the God who goes with them in each step of their journey. We are looking forward to sharing this time when we remember that God not only goes with us, but gives us His courage every step of the way.—*Debbie Geise*

Universal Christ Group Starts New Study: *Christian Contemplation*

It took us nine months to read Richard Rohr's *The Universal Christ* and discuss it deeply. We enjoyed our time together so much that we have chosen another (long) book.

The Universal Christ Study Group invites you to join us in reading *Journey to the Heart: Christian Contemplation through the Centuries*, edited by Kim Nataraja. The book is available on Amazon.com and from several used book sellers. We will start virtual meetings on September 14, and we would love to have you join us!

The contemplative tradition in Christianity traces its origins back to the prophet Elijah's mountain-top encounter with divine power. In the Gospels, we frequently read that Jesus withdrew to quiet places to pray. These biblical precedents have inspired a tradition of contemplation through the centuries. This remarkable book reveals the life and teachings of the following thirty great Christian mystics, each of whom is featured in a book chapter.



Jesus
St. John and St. Paul
Clement of Alexandria
Origen
Early Christianity and the Gospel of Thomas
The Cappadocian Fathers
The Desert Tradition
Evagrius of Pontus
John Cassian
St. Augustine of Hippo
St. Benedict
Hildegard von Bingen
St. Francis
St. Dominic
Meister Eckhart
Dante Alighieri

Richard Rolle, Walter Hilton, and Margery Kempe
The Cloud of Unknowing
Julian of Norwich
St. Ignatius Loyola
St. Teresa of Avila
St. John of the Cross
George Herbert and Thomas Traherne
The Jesus Prayer
Evelyn Underhill
Etty Hillesum
Thomas Merton
Swami Abhishiktananda
Bede Griffiths
John Main

Continued next page

Christian contemplation (concluded)

The chapters are written by a variety of well-known Christian writers. Each chapter gives a sense of the person or tradition and some excerpts from their teaching, in 12 to 17 pages.

Beginning September 14, we will meet via Zoom at 1:00 p.m. on Mondays. This will be another long study. However, since each chapter stands alone, it will also be more possible for people to come in and out of the group as their schedules allow.

We invite anyone who is interested to join us. Call Daisy Kirkpatrick 733-7143 for more information or to join the group.

Youth Ministry Ramps Up

After a hot summer we are excited to start up our programming for this fall! We are kicking off the year and wrapping up summer with a Junior High campfire (rising 7th and 8th graders) at the Maloneys' house on Thursday, September 3, 7:00 p.m.-8:30 p.m. Make sure to bring a mask and a chair with you! We will be eating smores and playing yard games. Please RSVP to youth@lansingunited.org.

Sunday School and Youth Group will be starting on Sunday, September 27. Stay tuned for more details!

Keep an eye on your email. We will be sending a survey to parents and youth about what types of programs you would be interested in attending online or in person.—*Krystal Cole*

LUMC Chicken Barbecue

September 19, at Baker Memorial Pits (Town Ball Fields)

From 10:30 till gone. (Note: They sell out fairly fast.)

Selling full dinners at just \$10, to support the church programs and missions.

You can help out with the LUMC barbecue (in addition to eating chicken). We need volunteers for the serving crew. Please check with Jamie Jones if you'd like to assist (279-8847). Meantime Barry Putnam (793-3746) is heading up the cooking crew, if you'd like to learn the secrets of the Cornell barbecue method. (Secret 1: It was developed mostly at Penn State!)

A Question from My Heart to Yours

How important is your faith in your daily life?
What are you willing to do to ensure its survival?

More important, what are you doing to grow and strengthen your faith?

Here is my answer pertaining to my spiritual life: I recently retired, and in spite of being on a reduced income, never have I been more calm and comfortable than I am right now. As God continues to prune me and help me separate my wants from my needs, the feelings of clarity and liberation have been overwhelming.

Recently, I cancelled my SiriusXM subscription. I decided to send the \$60 per quarter savings to help support the ministries of our church. Every time I am in my Jeep and hear a local radio station, it not only connects me to the local community, it reminds me to continue to separate my wants from my needs, and what is required from what I want to do and who I want to become. I call this awareness an example of Spiritual Connectivity.

As a result of this increased Spiritual Connectivity, I am finding that opportunities to help fund ministries of our church through monetary donations are becoming clearer and more numerous. When our CARES Act check arrived, we were fortunately to be able to send the entire amount to Lansing United Methodist Church to be used to help someone in need. When insurance refunds are sent to us, we will send them to LUMC as well.

Additionally, we've increased our 2020 LUMC operating budget pledge. I find it interesting that since my retirement, now that I am on a limited income, more and more monetary opportunities to donate are becoming available. God is wonderful. A Spiritual Surge and increased Spiritual Connectivity have been God's gifts to me. I feel blessed to be invited to participate in this glorious journey of growing in faith.—*Ed LaVigne, Stewardship Committee Chair*

Choir Note:

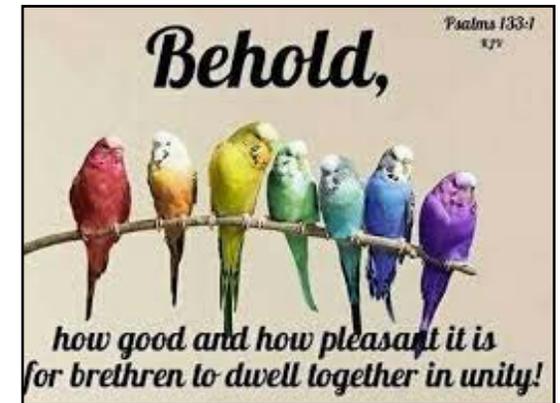
Hine ma tov u'ma na-im shevet achim gam ya-chad

Psalm 133 says "How wonderful, how beautiful, when brothers and sisters get along! It's like costly anointing oil... It's like the dew on Mount Hermon flowing down the slopes of Zion. Yes, that's where God commands the blessing, ordains eternal life." (Translation from The Message.) I had to look further to find out about that special dew. According to biblehub.com, the dew on Mount Hermon is unlike our dew in Upstate New York; it flows off the Mediterranean Sea as a soft mist in the summer to cool our brothers and sisters in the Middle East during its worst heat.

That simile works so well in 2020. We join forces to get along by not going out and gathering in large groups. And it is an amazing and beautiful thing. We persist and we are anointed with precious oil and we are refreshed with soft mist that breaks through the intense summer heat. Metaphorically,

Unlike the first to hear David's words set forth in Psalm 133, we have many tools available to help us get along. We can talk on the phone or send a letter by post. We can video-call and see the faces of loved ones. We can gather by Zoom to connect, discuss, and grow. We can video-edit individual singers to create a choir, and we can broadcast over the internet to reach hundreds of listeners.

May soft mist refresh your hot days as you live together in harmony with your brothers and sisters in Christ. Happy September! And remember that choir rehearsals start (by Zoom) September 9 at 7:00 p.m. Connect by emailing diane.withiam@gmail.com.



Psalm 133:1

- HINNEH MAH TOV U-MAH NA'IM
- Behold how good and how pleasant
(is)
- SHEVET AHIM GAM YAHAD
- (the) sitting (of) brothers also together

Manna in the Wilderness

Why I am supporting the Manna in the Wilderness Campaign

As you may be aware, the COVID-19 pandemic has forced Aldersgate, Asbury, Casowasco, Sky Lake, and Skye Farm to cancel an entire summer camp season, along with numerous church, family, and group retreats and gatherings. While these sites have begun opening some opportunities, the pandemic will continue to limit what is possible for a long time.

These precious ministries have entered a “wilderness time” of uncertainty and scarcity. In response to this challenge, our conference is making an emergency financial appeal, what we are calling the “Manna in the Wilderness Campaign,” to support our camp and retreat ministries in these unprecedented times.



I was moved by a recent conversation with two high school students from Baldwinsville, which drove home the value of our camp and retreat ministries for others, particularly youth and young adults.

As we talked about the challenges of living through this time of pandemic, they acknowledged that among all the losses of this crazy time, the one they felt most acutely was their lost time at Casowasco this summer. They have both been faithful in attendance there for almost 10 years!

What if Casowasco and our other camp and retreat sites NEVER opened again?

The challenge before us today is to do all that we can to ensure that our camp and retreat ministry sites not only survive but are able to thrive into the future.

Would you take some time today to pray and send whatever gift you can to help us keep our camp and retreats sites and ministries alive?

You can designate your gift to a site or Camp and Retreat Ministries: <https://campsandretreats.org/donate/>. You can also mail your support to Camp & Retreat Ministries, 7481 Henry Clay Blvd, Liverpool, NY 13088.

Together, we can weather this storm and stand again on this sacred ground when the COVID-19 storms pass.—*Rev. Bill Mudge is pastor at Baldwinsville UMC*



Virtual Church Calendar

lansingunited.org

lansingunited.org/events

Lansing United Methodist Church September 2020

Sunday church service: 9:30 a.m., via Facebook (through church website, lansingunited.org); music stream begins at 9:15; “Coffee time” follows at 10:30

Universal Christ Study Group, Mondays, 1:00 p.m. (Starting September 14)

Youth Campfire, September 3, 7:00 p.m.

Chicken Barbecue, Baker Pits, Town Fields, September 19, 10:30 till gone

Interfaith Dish-at-Home Dinner, September 24, 6:00

Blessing of the Chromebooks, September 27,

Virtual Meetings (you may join via Zoom; however, it’s best to check in advance):

Stewardship, 5:00 p.m., September 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

Church Council, September 1, 7:00

Safe Sanctuaries Team, September 3, 7:30

Trustees, September 14, 7:00

Staff-Parish Relations (Personnel), September 10, 7:00

Worship Committee, September 15, 7:00

Haiti Committee, September 21, 7:00

Interfaith Virtual Dinner, September 24, 6:00

Dear Friends: As you see throughout this issue, we are using Zoom for meetings and Facebook for the worship service. You do not need to be a member of Facebook to view the service (although it’s smoother that way). If you need any assistance with connecting to any of our meetings, please call the church office at 607-533-4070. We want everyone to be able to participate in this strange time.—gw



The Sunbeam

September 2020

VIRTUAL WORSHIP
9:30 A.M. VIA FACEBOOK OR
VISIT LANSINGUNITED.ORG
MUSIC STARTS 9:15

CHRISTIAN CONTEMPLATION
BOOK STUDY BEGINS SEPTEMBER 14

BLESSING THE CHROMEBOOKS
SUNDAY SCHOOL RESUMES
YOUTH GROUP RESUMES
SEPTEMBER 27

CHURCH BARBECUE
SEPTEMBER 19, 10:30, SOUTH LANSING

Lansing United Methodist Church

32 Brickyard Road, Lansing, NY 14882

one mile north of the stoplight on

Route 34B in South Lansing.

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