



LANSING UNITED
Methodist Church

The Sunbeam

August 2021

Worship 9:30 AM

LIVE AT MYERS PARK

OR STREAMED AT LANSINGUNITED.ORG

PLEASE JOIN US!



Looking Ahead

Pastor: Alison Schmied

Adult Ministries Coordinator: Karen Veaner

Christian Education Coordinator: Debbie Geise

**Church Can Happen Anywhere:
Join Us in the Park or Online!**

From the Pastor

Toward Brighter Days



I am looking forward to brighter days. For me that means:

- (1) Seeing your smiling face walk into the church building again, and being able to talk over a cup of coffee inside the Fellowship Hall.
- (2) Seeing how your faith grew during this challenging and unpredictable year and a half.
- (3) Seeing you grow more and more into the person God is calling you to be for such a time as this.

Basically, I'm looking forward to seeing you.

God has been gracious and faithful through all of the ups and

downs we've faced. We haven't had much COVID-19 illness in our congregation. We've been able to do some socially distanced mission work, sharing food with people who are hungry. We've learned how to do Zoom meetings and online worship. We've hosted multiple successful socially distanced chicken BBQs. Since June, we've been worshipping together in Myers Park at 9:30 a.m. each Sunday. And now, we're planning to have worship inside, in our Sanctuary, beginning the first Sunday in September. Praise God!

Of course, we will need to take precautions to protect our unvaccinated children. We will follow all CDC and Tompkins County Health Department guidelines. Please watch your email and our website, lansingunited.org, for details.

I'm very much looking forward to praising our Lord alongside you, face-to-face, once again. I miss the familiarity of the ritual, the beauty of music played on the organ and piano, and the wonderful variety of music offered by the choir and sung by the congregation. The thing I miss the most is seeing God's light shine through you as we worship God together. Church isn't the only place we find God, but it is one of the places we can expect to experience the power and presence of the Holy Spirit among us.

So I have great expectations for September worship. Jesus promised that wherever two or three gather in his name he is present among us (Matthew 18:20). That promise alone is a reason to assemble for worship! What a joy it will be to be together to praise God, reminding each other that we are God's beloved children.

I hope to see you soon!

Blessings,

Pastor Alison



CAMP LANSING UNITED AT MYERS PARK

You're invited
to Camp Lansing United
9:30 a.m. Sundays June 6 to
August 29
Myers Park, Pavilion D

Worshipping outdoors provides a different, less formal atmosphere, and a chance to appreciate the beauty of creation. This is an opportunity to focus on our relationship with God and friendship with others in an environment removed from the demands of everyday life

We hope that summer worship in the park will have these benefits and more as you attend "Camp Lansing United," our worship in Myers Park on during the remaining Sundays of August.

Our current plan is to return to the sanctuary for worship on September 5.

You may also participate online, as we have been live-streaming the worship service from the park.

Stay tuned to your weekly email for up-to-date information about Camp Lansing United. If you aren't receiving weekly emails, please contact the church office to sign up: 615-830-5527 or office@lansingunited.org.

Teacher Appreciation 2021

After navigating Sunday School classes on Zoom last Spring for the 2nd-6th grade classes and no classes for our youngest children as Zoom was too challenging at that time, the Children's Sunday School Team decided to put a plan in place for in-person Sunday School to meet on the church lawn with safety protocols that the Trustees approved. At the end of October, we transitioned to having classes in the classrooms with these same protocols in place along with an air filtration system that was created by Bill Thibault. With the support of a solid plan in place and the supportive approval from the Trustees, all of our children were now able to meet in-person in a stable, safe way.

The Sunday School teachers took on the additional responsibilities of ensuring social distancing, mask wearing, sanitizing, and distributing individualized materials and supplies. Every step was worth it as they were able to interact with the children face-to-face.

Last year, the children started out doing science experiments in the "Faithatory," a laboratory where the children learned about their faith. They were learning what it means to be "God's Treasure" as stated in Deuteronomy 7:6, "For you are a holy people, who belong to the Lord your God. Of all the people on earth, the Lord your God has chosen you to be his own special treasure." As you heard during the Children's Message, the children related how each of us goes through a process of refinement throughout our lives similar to that of a diamond. Through a study of Exodus and how Moses led the Israelites as they came to know who God is, the Ten Commandments and how Jesus came to fulfill the law through loving one another, prayer and how we grow closer to God through it, and the Armor of God and how God gives us all we need to follow Him, the children learned how God gives us sanctifying grace and refines us as we are made more and more into the likeness of Christ throughout our journeys. This Spring, we were able to return to doing the experiments and learning in the Faithatory as the children discovered what it means to live out their identity of Beloved Child of God and God's Masterpiece.

It has been a treasure to witness these teachers express their commitment to the children of Lansing United and to God throughout this year. The genuine interest in and concern for the children, the appreciation for each child as a unique being, and the love poured out are gifts that our teachers give to our children every time they interact with them. We are blessed by

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Teacher appreciation (concluded)

and we are thankful for the treasures of Kathy Simons and Jo Baker, PreK, K, and 1st grade teachers, Laurie Conlon, Naomi Littlejohn, and Kelly Quinn, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grade teachers, and Bonnie Blair and Sharon Bowman, 5th and 6th grade teachers.

I would also like to thank Monica Morgan and Helena VanEvery for their solid support in the PreK-1st grade class, and Kay Moore and Kelly Tracy for being faithful substitute teachers.

Thank you to Sharon Bowman for teaching our 3rd grade acolytes how to shine the light of Christ during one-one-one sessions in the sanctuary that were recorded for our live streamed worship services.

I would also like to express great thanks to our youth partners in ministry who were leaders of games and assistants to our youngest children during our Winter and Spring Festivals this year. What a joy it is to watch them grow into strong and caring leaders who warmly and patiently guide, help, and serve as a mentor for our younger children. Thank you, Jordan Brinkley, Aurora Davis, Aubrey DeHaas, Elena Gaffney, Aidan Maloney, Mary Kate Quinn, and Anna Weaver-Mulé.

Last, but certainly not least, thank you to all of the parents, grandparents, and families of our Sunday School children who have been so supportive, flexible, and committed to their children's faith formation in an unpredictable and unstable time.

An Invitation

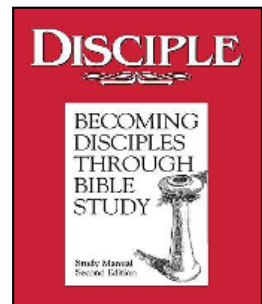
We would very much like to see your name on the teacher appreciation list next year! Please see Debbie Geise to become part of this great program.

Adult Ministries

Disciple Bible Study with Bonnie Blair & Pastor Alison

Sunday, August 8, 15, and 22, 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.

Hope is alive—catch the vision of God's kingdom of peace.



Interfaith Community gatherings:

August 26, Myers Park, Pavilion B



Adult Forum: A Study of Jonah Facilitated by Ken Hover

Part 1 of 3

Thank you all for the opportunity to explore Jonah in the church service on April 11, followed by three sessions of Adult Forum. I am sure that I benefited the most from the time that we shared together. We ran out of time in our third week of the series, so I decided to collect my thoughts on the discussion points that we did not get to, or were not captured in the April 11 video recording.

Just before we timed-out, our friend Jonah had been delivered by the whale (just like Uber or Fedex), right back to where he started. The reinvigorated, re-inspired, figuratively resurrected Jonah was back-on-the-road-again, on his way to Nineveh to fulfill God's original command from the first verse of the first chapter of Jonah:

"Get up and go to Nineveh, that great city, and declare against it the proclamation that I am commanding you."

Thanks to Alison's "Most effective sermon ever preached" last January, we know that Jonah did indeed declare God's proclamation against the people of Nineveh, to great and startling effect, to the extreme that even all the animals were fitted-out in sackcloth. Up to that part of the story it is clear that even though Jonah initially attempted to ignore, evade, delay, or postpone his response to God's command, God's message was delivered, and God's will was done on earth as it was in heaven. (The ultimate end that we pray for every week.)

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Jonah Study (continued)

Focusing briefly on that “happy ending,” we might consider the whale of our earliest Sunday School/VBS memories to be not so much a sea monster to be feared but a “vehicle of salvation.” (That’s a pretty strong term, perhaps “vehicle of redirection” would be more appropriate.) But however we classify the whale, it was instrumental in turning Jonah around, getting him back on track, and delivering him close to his original, pre-cruise starting point. (A glance at the map, ancient or modern, shows no navigable whale-route to Nineveh.) God gave Jonah a “do-over.”

Our second-last discussion point on April 25 (third week) was along the lines of taking hope, encouragement, and comfort from God’s willingness to give each one of us (and all of us collectively) not only one, but many “do-overs.” I think it would be enlightening and uplifting to share personal stories of the “whales” in our lives that may have been instrumental in turning us around. In my experience, observation, and imagination such whales can appear in the form of events, situations, calamities, opportunities, closed doors, opened doors, victories, defeats, happy times, or sad times. (The Apostle Paul would include “tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, or sword. Romans 8:35.) Sometimes the most influential whales are in the form of other persons in our lives, and as a sailor would say “the closer of the whale, the bigger the whale.” Whatever their source or origin, “Life-Whales,” can be scary, and we can spend a lot of time, angst, and energy protesting (and whining about) unplanned changes of direction. It often takes us a long time and a lot of perspective to recognize how much



God’s whales helped us. (“Praise the Lord, I (finally) saw the light.”)

Without asking for a show of hands, it appeared to me from the zoom gallery that most of us recognized the value (and blessing) of the whales God’s sometimes uses to get us back

on track or headed back in the right direction. We closed that portion of the discussion with the good news that if Jonah’s fish or whale was “big,” (or

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as the New International Version says, “huge”), there is room for all of us in God’s sometimes scary but essential whale of redirection.

With only seconds to go in our small group discussion, I used the phrase: “but speaking of large animals...” to introduce a fundamental challenge in the book of Jonah; perhaps the most profound challenge, often upstaged by the drama of the whale. This troubling “Elephant in Jonah’s Room” is found in Jonah 3:10-4:11, and immediately follows the overwhelmingly repentant response to Jonah’s message.

“When God saw what they [the repentant Ninevites] did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened.

But to Jonah [God’s forgiveness of the Ninevites] seemed very wrong, and he became angry.

“That is what I tried to forestall by fleeing to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love...”

But God said to Jonah, “Is it right for you to be angry...?”

“It is,” Jonah said. “And I’m so angry I wish I were dead.”

But the Lord said... “Should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people?”

This intensely candid and honest dialog between God and a person is one of the few recorded in scripture. (See also Moses and God, and Elijah and God, both on Mt. Horeb (Sinai) in Exodus 3 and 1 Kings 19. The book of Job also comes to mind.) Jonah is hopping-mad at God for forgiving the Ninevites and withholding their destruction. From Jonah’s perspective, if anybody deserved God’s wrath it would have been the Ninevites. The Old Testament is full of “smiting” and “mighty smoting” of many “-ites,” and Jonah is absolutely and righteously convinced that the time for the Lord’s retribution had not only come but was overdue. Jonah’s own generation had experienced the vile wrath and atrocities of the Assyrian Empire, commanded from their capital at Nineveh. In 2 Kings we read that Jonah had cried out to King Jeroboam of Israel that the king had to fight back against Assyrian oppression. Jonah had witnessed the deportation, enslavement (and worse) of entire tribes of Israel who were obliterated from the earth. Jonah knew it was going to continue until the northern kingdom of Israel was wiped from the map (as it was, in the year 721 BC). Jonah knew in his heart of hearts that the Ninevites were not worthy of, nor were they deserving of God’s mercy and forgiveness. But God forgave them.....

To be continued



Virtual Church Calendar
lansingunited.org

Lansing United Methodist Church August 2021

Sunday Worship:

In person: 9:30 a.m., Myers Park, Pavilion D

Virtual: connect via YouTube at lansingunited.org/events

Disciple Bible Study: August 8, 15, and 22, 4:00 p.m., church library

Chicken BBQ Fundraiser: August 21, 10:30 a.m., Bob Baker Memorial Pavilion, Lansing Town Ballfields

Interfaith Community Dinner: August 26, 6:00 p.m., Myers Park, Pavilion B

Virtual Church Meetings:

(connect via Zoom at lansingunited.org/events)

Stewardship: August 9, 16, 23, and 30, 5:00 p.m.

Trustees: August 9, 7:00 p.m., via Zoom

Worship Committee: August 10, 7:00 p.m.

Staff-Parish Relations: August 12, 6:30 p.m. (members only)

Youth Mission Can and Bottle Drive

Bring your cans and bottles to the shop at the north end of Triphammer Road, at your convenience. Just tell them it's a donation for Lansing Youth Mission.



WORSHIP
9:30 A.M. AT LANSING TOWN PARK IN MYERS, PAVILION D
OR VIA YOUTUBE
VISIT LANSINGUNITED.ORG/EVENTS

Church Chicken Barbecue, August 21, 10:30 a.m. til gone!

The Sunbeam August 2021

Lansing United Methodist Church

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one mile north of the spotlight on

Route 34B in South Lansing.

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The Sunbeam is published monthly by
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