



April 22, 2021



It's the Fourth Sunday of Easter on April 25th!

Christ is risen! The Fourth Sunday of Easter is a special day for LUMC! Bishop Peggy Johnson, along with a team of worship leaders and musicians, has produced a Post-Easter Video Worship Service for use by churches in her two annual conferences. Bishop John is the preacher. Our LiveStream service begins at 9:00 a.m. Audio pre-service music begins at 8:45 a.m. Join us on [Facebook](#) or [YouTube](#)!

Weary Years, Silent Tears By Bishop Peggy A. Johnson

When the guilty verdict at the Derek Chauvin trial was announced, I immediately contacted one of our pastors, the Rev. Dr. Ron Bell, Jr. He is an Elder in the Peninsula-Delaware Conference who serves the Camphor UMC in St. Paul, Minnesota. Since last year, he has been hard at work ministering to a congregation and community that has been traumatized by the murder of George Floyd. Click [here](#) to read the rest of Bishop Johnson's thoughts on the verdict in the Derek Chauvin trial.



Pastor Bill's on Time Apart! - Pastor Bill is on "time apart" **until April 30**, planning the transition to his new appointment. While away, PB is conducting Zoom Bible Studies and keeping up with routine church meetings by Zoom. With gratitude, the Rev.

Tom Davis-Shappel is serving as PB's pastoral care coverage. Pastor Tom is a retired elder from our conference serving interim local church appointments in retirement. Pastor Bill knows him to be an excellent pastor. If you require pastoral care during this time apart, please contact the church office by telephone at (215) 855-8364 or e-mail at office@lansdaleumc.org. Becky Conrad will make necessary contacts and inform Pastor Tom and Pastor Bill of needs arising. Please be in prayer for PB's time to plan for his transition.



EARTH DAY April 22, 2021 -- Creation Justice Ministries has chosen Faithful Resilience as its theme for Earth Day 2021 --

In preparation for the social, physical and spiritual storms of the climate crisis, faith communities must take a proactive stance towards resilience. We are asked to consider how we are anticipating, preparing for, and “bouncing forward” into a just, sustainable, and resilient community. We can work in small ways toward “resilience.” Click [here](#) to go to the Church and Society page of our website to learn how we can help restore our earth by protecting monarch butterflies. You will also find a link for instructions to plant milkweed to help protect monarch butterflies; it is a project you can do at home.

Church and Society



Church Finances Looking Up...! -- In more ways than one, church finances are looking up. Looking up to Christ and his church's mission (to make disciples for Jesus Christ through the world's transformation) has inspired tremendously generous giving during the pandemic emergency. "Thank you!" seems

inadequate to the colossal endeavor, but the gratitude expressed to all our givers is genuine and heartfelt.

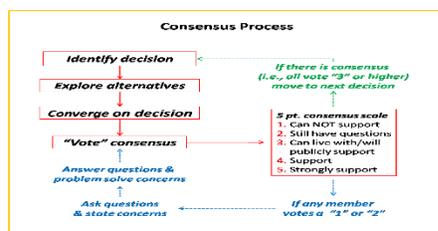
Steady giving kept our ark afloat on the choppy sea of uncertainty. Givers stuck with the church by expressing their consistent commitment to funding missions, relief funds, and the church treasury. New givers (non-members) who connect with the online LiveStream community have given steadily and faithfully.

Year-end into first-quarter new year giving is looking up! In round numbers, \$96,000 was received, and \$92,000 was disbursed in the first quarter. Cash on hand tops \$55,000. The satisfaction of reporting these figures nearly led Warren and Darren to perform a Zoom Chicken Dance at the recent Finance Committee meeting! When these two dedicated servants are optimistic, it's time to praise the Lord. Their careful monitoring of finances is a vital gift to the church. A majority of envelope holders are giving to the operating and improvement funds. Electronic giving is increasing and helps to keep cash flow healthy, which is critical to every non-profit organization, including the church. This year's pledges cover 51% of the budget, which is another indication of things looking up!

The Covid-19 Impact Fund is looking up! An initial anonymous gift last year of \$10,000 helped us establish the fund and grow it by \$13,000 more. So far, the fund has disbursed more than \$9,000 to soften the economic impact of Covid-19 for church and community people. It's paid rents and utility bills, fixed cars, purchased medicine, and fed people. Two government stimulus checks and extended unemployment benefits have helped many Americans, but for the short-term only. Sometime soon, back rents and delayed payments will come due, and people will need more help. Let's keep funding the help!

Looking up! The slide accompanying this article shows a young woman looking up as money is flowing. Is the money flowing down or up? Yes! God gives us abundant blessings flowing down to make life possible. We then return offerings of deep thanks for life's privilege of serving God with all we are and have!

Praise God from whom all blessings flow, praise God all creatures here below, praise God above all heavenly host, praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! Amen!



Formal Consensus Training Set for May 2nd & 16th! --

The Southern Montgomery County (SOMOCO) Mission Link of the East District of the UMC plans two training sessions on the decision-making method called "Formal Consensus." The training is prompted by important decisions that UM

churches will make following the next General Conference. The UMC is in

organizational flux about the authority of Scripture, the place of the LGBT+ community in the church's life, and how we understand the church's core mission. It's quite likely that all UMC local churches will face a decision about joining one of several new denominations that'll spin-off from the UMC. How will the decisions be made? Up or down voting? Win-lose voting? Or consensus voting to arrive at a peaceable decision? Jess Umlauf, a colleague of Pastor Bill's, will facilitate the training. Here are Jess' descriptions of the two sessions:

"Formal Consensus is a peaceful group decision-making process that aims at weaving everyone's best ideas and key concerns, often resulting in surprising and more creative solutions. It is neither compromise nor voting. In the first training session, an introduction to Formal Consensus, you'll understand the basic dynamics which drive group decision-making and learn the foundations, process, and proposal structure critical to successful use of Formal Consensus."

"After gaining an understanding of the basic structure and foundation of Formal Consensus in session one, the second session will help you learn about creating additional shared values and guiding principles for decision-making, learn the roles to play and to set agendas, understanding and reviewing impediments to Formal Consensus, and practice examples of group discussion techniques."

With the training in hand, local churches stand a better than fair chance at making important decisions about their futures with a lot less mess! **All Church Council members will find this material helpful. Everyone can learn these skills for their personal and professional lives as well. Information about accessing the Zoom sessions is forthcoming. Please send an e-mail to office@lansdaleumc.org indicating your interest in attending the virtual sessions on Sundays, May 2nd and May 16th, from 2:00-3:30 p.m.**



Our Service is Simulcast Each Sunday on Facebook Live and YouTube! -- Join us Sunday mornings at 9:00 a.m. on our Facebook Page [click here](#), or YouTube Channel [click here](#) for a weekly praise, prayer, and proclamation celebration of God's love. We love discovering who worships with

us, so [click here](#) to sign our Virtual Friendship Pad. Access our weekly digital bulletin

to sing along and read the lessons, [click here](#), and you can listen to sermons when you [click here](#)! Our doors may be closed to worshippers right now, but our hearts, minds, and hands continue to serve. You're welcome to join us anytime!



In-Person Worship Survey -- We invite you to take an online worship service to aid in planning for a return to in-person worship. Optimism grows daily about returning to in-person worship as more and more Americans are vaccinated for the Covid-19 virus. Vaccinations are key to returning safely. Your participation will help immensely in making decisions about returning. The asterisk (*) indicates that all questions require a response, or your answers won't be included in the survey analysis. Please answer all the questions, so the best data is revealed. Click [here](#) to go directly to the survey. Thank you!



The April 14, 2021, issue of the NewSpirit Digest is [here](#). From the Digest, you can access the Spring, 2021, Edition of the NewSpirit Newspaper, or you can go directly to the Newspaper by clicking [here](#).

You can also access the recording and PowerPoint slides of the webinar, "Vaccines, Variants and the Road Ahead," presented by Dr. Elsen Jacob and Dr. Susan Jacob, or you can directly to the webinar by clicking [here](#).



Higher Education Scholarships from the EPAUMC

-- April 26 is rapidly approaching. On that date, the Education Society of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of the United Methodist Church will be accepting grant applications to assist worthy individuals with defraying the cost of higher education for the 2021-2022 school year. The application is available on the Conference website. It can be accessed as "Education Society Grants" [here](#). All applications received in the Conference Office (between and including) April 26 to May 10 will be considered for a grant. Like last year, all applications will be considered. Unless there is some disqualification, grant

recipients will be randomly selected. If you have questions, please contact the Education Society Chairperson, Al Adey [here](#).



April's Mission Emphasis - Mission-Partnering with Bethel Hill UMC - Over the weekend of April 9-11, volunteers built a house frame for a single-family dwelling in the Lehigh Valley. Click [here](#) to go to our website to see pictures and a video of the volunteers in action. You can still contribute to defray the

material's costs and build a fund for future endeavors. Click [here](#) to go to our website's giving page to contribute to our monthly mission emphasis. All donations sent will be in loving honor of *Peter Noll, Jim Newell, Jim Fisher, Bob Snyder, George Starrett, and Merrill Alderfer*, whose dedication to missions was life-changing. You can make a life-changing gift today.



From Church and Society Work Group - Election Day

Yes, there's another election day just around the corner. It's May 18. And, in fact, thanks to no-excuse mail ballots, widespread voting is already open. In addition to deciding local races, voters this year will

elect a slew of new judges to Pennsylvania's three statewide appellate courts — judges who will no doubt shape important policy in the state for at least the next decade. These are some of the most powerful positions in state government. But the elections that determine who gets the jobs tend to get little attention from voters. In the last two judicial election years that featured partisan contests, turnout hovered in the low 20% range, compared with more than 70% turnout in 2020's record-setting election. Read "A Voter Guide to Pennsylvania's 2021 Judicial Elections" [here](#).



Celebrating the Life of Peter Noll -- On Saturday, May 22, from 1:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. Mary Noll will be celebrating Peter's life. Please click on [this link](#) for the invitation and to RSVP. **Please read the entire invitation.** If you plan to attend, you must sign up for a time slot. This celebration will be outdoors and will be following Covid-19 protocols.



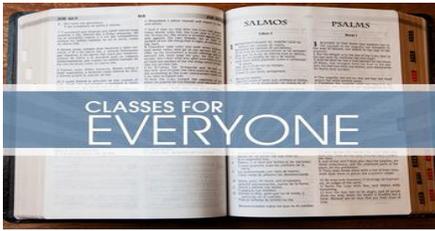
Zoom Bible Studies Continue! -- You can join your congregation, friends, and Pastor Bill at two Zoom Bible Studies each week during Lent. The **Tuesday mornings** at 10:00 a.m. gathering will remain as a study of the appointed lectionary readings for each of the Tuesdays in Lent. On **Thursday evenings** at 7:00

p.m. during Lent, Pastor Bill will lead a **Lenten Bible Study** called *Behold the Lamb, Behold the Man*, a biblical and theological examination of the *Lamb of God* title for Jesus used in the New testament. Make the studies a spiritual practice to help you practice the means of grace during the seasons of Lent and Easter. Contact [Becky](#) for the Zoom Meeting links to access the studies!



Lansdale UMC Children's Ministry on Facebook and YouTube -- Miss Liz Bonner posts interesting items for our children to watch, read and do throughout the week. Click the image to join us on Facebook.

Miss Liz also LiveStreams the weekly Sunday School lesson on our YouTube channel at 10:00 each Sunday morning. Click [here](#) to access our YouTube Channel.



New Horizons Fellowship -- On April 25th, New Horizons will be discussing the topic titled "Awe and Wonder" drawing from Genesis 1:1-2:3, Psalm 19, and Matthew 6:25-34.

We meet at 10:00 a.m. following the Sunday morning worship service via Zoom (the connection details are below). Anyone is welcome to join at that time by clicking [here](#).

Meeting ID: 875 4237 2475 Passcode: 710204

Wesleyan Class -- The Wesleyan Class will continue with Reflections and meditation on the topic "Life After the Pandemic" with occasional tie-in to the Sunday sermon. It will be sent by email to class members and others who wish to be on the distribution list. It will continue until the end of May. Contact Verna Colliver (vmcolliver@gmail.com) if you want to be added to the distribution list



Conversations on Race -- Conversations on Race recently resumed with an analysis of the presidential election results and what they say about racism in America. Our group decided to concentrate its efforts on a meaningful Lenten

experience to face the "isms" (racism, sexism, classism) that keep us from meeting our neighbors eye-to-eye as equals in Christ's eyes, on a level plain. If you'd like to help plan the experience, you're welcome to join the conversation. The next Zoom Meeting will be announced soon. Here's the Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87919827576pwd=NJVJZld3V0dtRitERWVKdmcxRDhUdz09>;

Meeting ID: 879 1982 7576; Passcode: 573307.



Special Lansdale UMC Collection

Covid-19 Impact Fund Is Making a Difference

Sometimes, simply making a difference is all that's needed. The Covid-19 Impact Fund has been doing just that! Reaching about \$15,000 at its start, we've distributed over \$5,200 to pay 10 rents, make 1 car

repair, buy 1 bundle of groceries, help one person get current with their electric bill,

help one person get current with their health insurance premiums, and partner with another UMC to provide Christmas presents for 2 families. We are working with several churches in the borough as well as Manna on Main to share the interviewing of those in need and the cost associated with helping. It's been a rewarding experience. In addition to the congregational and community care, we've also paid to buy PPE to return to worship safely at the right time, and pay for costs associated with the LiveStream broadcasts on Sunday mornings.

Click on an image below for more information:



UPDATED! – COVID-19 STATUS – NEW!

Caution and Optimism!

Montco's case count has risen steadily since mid-March, attaining levels similar to summer 2020. At current case levels, the county remains in the **very high-risk** category according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and Montgomery County health authorities. The test positivity rate is holding steady at **8%**, which signals that the virus is uncontrolled and cases are undercounted. The danger of contracting the virus is real. None of this information is good news. Vaccinations are proceeding, which is **great news**. Vaccinations offer the best hope of returning to in-person worship most quickly. Please consider receiving one of the safe and effective vaccines. For the time being, caution is the wisest course of action. LUMC will remain in its current status of limited openings for LiveStream worship and other approved uses. Say your prayers for the many suffering and the many who mourn the death of loved ones, friends, and colleagues.



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