Circuit Rider

February 2023

Praising God • Making Disciples • Serving All

Lansdale United Methodist Church 300 N. Broad St., Lansdale, PA 19446

Website: www.lansdaleumc.org | email: office@lansdaleumc.org | livestream worship Sunday mornings 9 am Facebook or YouTube

Ash Wednesday Communion

We will begin the season of Lent with Worship and Communion on Wednesday, February 22 at 7 PM. We will also have the imposition of Ashes. Lent is the season of 40 days prior to Easter. It is a time for reflection, confession, and repentance. You are invited to begin the season of Lent as we worship together.

Block Party Planning Team Meeting

You are invited to our first planning meeting for the Community Block Party on Wednesday, February 8, 7pm in the Conference room. We will begin planning for the Block Party which is scheduled to be held in the church parking lot and front lawn on Saturday, September 16, 2023. Let Pastor Warner know if you are interested in helping with the planning of the Block Party.

Heeding God's Call Ending Gun Violence: Prayers



LUMC installed the Heeding God's Call-Memorial to the Lost T-shirt Display, for our MLK Day of Action against Gun Violence Project. This

display will be on our front lawn until February, 6th 2023. Please join us in praying for the families that these individuals leave behind. Let us wrap our arms and hearts around them in prayer. There is a basket outside of the sanctuary, on the table. If you would like to take a name, or names, to pray over- please do so.

Souper Bowl Sunday Soup Collection

Every year our United Women in Faith (UMW) Group sponsors a soup collection for "Souper" Bowl Sunday. This year the date is February 12, 2023. Please bring in meat-based soups to be collected for Manna On Main Street. A collection area will be set up in the sanctuary on the Altar table for you to drop off your cans and we will get them over to Manna. Thank you in advance! Contact Marilyn Snyder at 215-393-5583, with any questions.



Lenten Bible Study

This is a study titled "The First Real Christian" and it focuses on the Book of James. The author is J.D.Walt. We will meet six times for one hour. First meeting will be on Tuesday 2/21 at 7 P.M. in the library or conference room, then on each Wednesday at 7 P.M. on 3/1, 3/8, 3/15, 3/22 and finish up on 3/29 so Holy Week is free. This is a study that requires you to do some homework between meetings (not hard) but does not require any open sharing unless you are led to do so. Please contact Madeline Brown at 678-435-5032, blockleygal@gmail.com by call, text or email by 2/14 so enough books can be ordered for each person. There is no charge for the books but donations are accepted for LUMC missions.

Note From the Pastor

I have a book, *The Mentor Leader*, on my reading list written by Tony Dungy, former football player and coach. He served as head coach of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers and the Indianapolis coats for 13 years. He transformed the Buccaneers from one of the worst teams in the NFL to leading them to the post season four times in six years. He led the Colts to victory in the 1979 Super Bowl. He was the first Black coach to win a Super Bowl title. I admire and respect his life and his career.

Tony Dungy is retired from coaching football. He has been inducted into the Football Hall of Fame in 2016. And today he works as a commentator on football games for NBC. There are articles in the news this week that are criticizing him because of his tweet regarding looking forward to participating in a March for life in Washington, D.C. Many people are calling for Dungy to be fired because of this tweet. Others are defending and praising him for taking a pro-life stand.

I really respect this statement written on abortion. I had the privilege of being able to sit in on the legislative session at General Conference that actually wrote this statement. I remember how the group was split into two groups, pro-life and prochoice. They argued and tried to force the other group to change. Finally, someone who was on the pro-life side spoke up and said something along the lines of,

"I came here to advocate for a pro-life position. I was intent on getting other people to see the issue the way I

see it. I've come to realize that while we have differing views, we both want to do God's will. We just differ in our understanding of what God's will is. Can we write a statement that recognizes God's will from both of our perspectives." (The wording is mine as I remember

hearing it. It captures the gist of what was said but is not verbatim.)

I really like our UM official stand on abortion. The UM Book of Discipline section on Social Principles: the Nurturing Community says the following about abortion:

The beginning of life and the ending of life are the God-given boundaries of human existence. While individuals have always had

some degree of control over when they would die, they now have the awesome power to determine when and even whether new individuals will be born. Our belief in the sanctity of unborn human life makes us reluctant to approve abortion.

But we are equally bound to respect the sacredness of the life and well-being of the mother and the unborn child.

We recognize tragic conflicts of life with life that may justify abortion, and in such cases we support the legal option of abortion under proper medical procedures by certified medical providers. We support parental, guardian, or other responsible adult notification and consent before abortions can be performed on girls who have not yet reached the age of legal adulthood. We cannot affirm abortion as an acceptable means of birth control, and we unconditionally reject it as a means of gender selection or eugenics (see Resolution 3184).

We oppose the use of late-term abortion known as dilation and extraction (partial-birth abortion) and call for the end of this practice except when the physical life of the mother is in danger and no other medical procedure is available, or in the case of severe fetal anomalies incompatible with life. This procedure shall be performed only by certified medical providers. Before providing their services, abortion providers should be required to offer women the option of anesthesia.

We call all Christians to a searching and prayerful inquiry into the sorts of conditions that may cause them to consider abortion. We entrust God to provide guidance, wisdom, and discernment to those facing an unintended pregnancy.

The Church shall offer ministries to reduce unintended pregnancies. We commit our Church to continue to provide nurturing ministries to those who terminate a pregnancy, to those in the midst of a crisis pregnancy, and to those who give birth.

We mourn and are committed to promoting the diminishment of high abortion rates. The Church shall encourage ministries to reduce unintended pregnancies such as comprehensive, age-appropriate sexuality education, advocacy in regard to contraception, and support of initiatives that enhance the quality of life for all women and girls around the globe.

Young adult women disproportionately face situations in which they feel that they have no choice due to financial, educational, relational, or other circumstances beyond their control. The Church and its local congregations and campus ministries should be in the forefront of supporting existing ministries and developing new ministries that help such women in their communities. They should also support those crisis pregnancy centers and pregnancy resource centers that compassionately help women explore all options related to unplanned pregnancy. We particularly encourage the Church, the government, and social service agencies to support and facilitate the option of adoption. (See ¶ 161L.) We affirm and encourage the Church to assist the ministry of crisis pregnancy centers and pregnancy resource centers that compassionately help women find feasible alternatives to abortion.

Governmental laws and regulations do not provide all the guidance required by the informed Christian conscience. Therefore, a decision concerning abortion should be made only after thoughtful and prayerful consideration by the parties involved, with medical, family, pastoral, and other appropriate counsel.

I agree in part with Tony Dungy but I also disagree in part. While abortion should never be taken lightly, there are times where it is a tragic conflict of life with life. I also admire Dungy for his support and help for children who are given up at birth. Dungy has been married to his wife, Lauren, for 40 years. They are parents to 11 children and have fostered more than 100 children. He also established a foundation that helps children develop a love for reading and he founded an organization called "All Pro Dad" that helps men to become better fathers. Dungy is prolife even after birth as he seeks to provide care and

support for children both before and after birth. He is actively supporting and helping children after they are born.

Our world is so full of either or thinking and misses the gray areas that encompasses so much of life. Jesus was a master of the gray areas of life. He constantly challenged the closed-mindedness of the conservative Pharisees. And he frustrated the people on the left as he constantly returned to God's intentions and desire. I wish every decision in life was simple and easy. The reality for most of us is that life is complicated. Let's give thanks for God's grace in Jesus Christ that moves beyond the either or thinking of people on both the right and the left.

My first thought after hearing the news stories about Tony Dungy was to put his book aside and not read it. But after looking at the whole of Dungy's life and learning more about how he helps children, I've decided to still read his book. Tony Dungy is a good man who has had a successful life and career. I can learn a lot from Tony Dungy even if I don't fully agree with everything he believes. I can still grab some morsels and tidbits from his wisdom and life experience.

Got Questions Sermon Series Responses

Thank you to everyone who has submitted a question or two for the Got Questions sermon series. We received 15 questions last Fall and another 15 questions this past January after sharing the first list of questions. These questions are challenging and thoughtful. The questions are listed on the LUMC Facebook page if you would like to read them. I'm working on the sermon series to respond to your questions and expect to be preaching the Got Questions series beginning in Lent at the end of February. Please keep me in prayer as I respond to your questions.

Nursery Attendant Search

We are continuing to look for a second person to staff the Infant/Toddler nursery. Donna Fritz has been hired as one of the attendants. We are looking for an additional person to help support her. We have already seen a couple families taking advantage of the nursery since Donna began running the nursery in August. Contact the church office for an application.

LUMC MLK Day of Action to End Gun Violence By Verna Colliver

On a cold but sunny MLK Day, LUMC volunteers with others from nearby churches gathered to install the Memorial to the Lost honoring those who lost their lives to gun violence in Montgomery County in the last five years. Dressed in warm jackets with mallets in their gloved hands, the dozens of volunteers, young and old, assembled the frames made of PVC pipe and hammered them into the ground in neat rows in front of the church along North Broad Street. The Memorial consists of T-shirts in a variety of colors with the name, age and date of death printed on the front. Draped over the frames and placed in rows, the shirts resemble tombstones in a cemetery, a stark reminder of the many lives lost to gun violence.

With the leadership of Bryan Miller and Rev. David Brown of Heeding God's Call to End Gun Violence, the event was planned and organized by Pastor Stew Warner, Jill Nickerson and Verna Colliver. Administrative assistant, Ally Hediger and Luann Ingram helped with communication and publicity. A special Thank You is due to Kathy Herbert who raked and cleaned the area in front of the church on the day prior to the event. Bob and Kathy Kennedy and Kris Neild also assisted in setting up the sound system and preparing for the dedication service. In a loving gesture, Maryellen Reinmiller prepared a basket with slips of paper bearing the names of the sixty-six individuals on the T-shirt memorials, offering them to members of the congregation as reminders to embrace the families and friends of the lost in prayer. The women of LUMC plan to add luminaries to the display.

Starting at 9:30 a. m. on MLK Day, the volunteers worked together to install the 60 plus T-shirts, most of them already marked with the names, while inside a small group carefully etched names, ages and date of death with permanent markers on additional T-shirts. Thank you to all who came out to help make this project a reality. MLK Day, January 16, 2023, was chosen by LUMC as a Day of Action to End Gun Violence to honor the legacy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., prophet and preacher of nonviolence, whose life was ended by a gun on April 4, 1968. Heeding God's Call to End Gun Violence and



similar faith-based groups see the need to stop the rising tide of gun violence and to oppose the powerful political lobbies, profit-driven gun dealers and manufacturers which are fueling this crisis. A service of dedication at 11:00 am, led by Pastor Stew Warner and Jill Nickerson, included prayer, scripture readings, a litany of commitment and a Remembrance of the Lost by Bryan Miller, Executive Director of Heeding God's Call.

Reflections were shared by Pastor Stew Warner and special guests, PA Representative Steve Malagari and District Superintendent Rev. Dr. Andrew Foster.

LUMC thanks the other groups who joined us on Monday: Salford Mennonite Church, Harleysville; Plains Mennonite Church, Hatfield; St. Peter's Lutheran Church, North Wales; Christ United Methodist Church, Lansdale; St. Matthews United Methodist Church, Valley Forge; Interfaith Philly; and other individuals.

Later in the spring, a Gun Violence Awareness Day is planned for advocacy and public education about gun violence and what can be done to end it. Gun violence prevention is increasingly an urgent issue with daily news reports of gun deaths in our cities and counties. Faith communities are needed more than ever to work together to find solutions to this crisis. With the powerful witness of the T-shirts in front of the building, Lansdale UMC and Heeding God's Call want to bring together faith groups to follow the biblical mandate to be peacemakers and to heed God's call to bring healing and hope to the brokenhearted.

We will continue to work with Heeding God's Call to End Gun Violence to "energize the American faith community and actively seek an end to gun violence through public witness and policy advocacy." Learn more about this organization at

www.heedinggodscall.org

To see the photo gallery and videos of the MLK Day of Action, go to www.lansdaleumc.org.

Heeding God's Call Day of Action Against Gun Violence







Christian Education

February is a month we often associate with Valentine's Day and all things hearts, flowers, and love. Though these things are lovely and well meaning, they are fleeting and passing. But we all know a love that is forever, that never fails, never gives up. Yes, that kind of love can only come from Jesus. He is our savior and out constant source of strength. These are the lessons children will be learning about in Jr. Church and Sunday School during the month of February.

Jesus would tell stories to the crowds that followed him, to help them understand the kingdom of heaven, and how much their God loved them. These stories are called Parables. Simple ways to explain complex ideas. There are many parables that Jesus told. The children will be experiencing a few of them over the next few weeks. We will be engaging in Story Telling, crafts, videos, and Legos! The Legos have been a huge hit. The children build their parable using everyday Legos. I am simply amazed by how they have taken on this new idea and run with it. The children are awesome!

Another aspect of Jr Church and Children's and Adult's Sunday School classes is our continuing sponsorship of a child, Alan, in Guatemala. We originally sponsored him through Compassion International, as a Lenten Mission Project, before Covid. We committed to continue sponsoring him and are still doing so today. The children write letters to Alan a couple times a year. He writes them back too and thanks the children for sponsoring him. It enables him to go to school and help provide for his family. Our children enjoy hearing about his life and schooling in Guatemala. Please continue to pray for Alan and his family also!

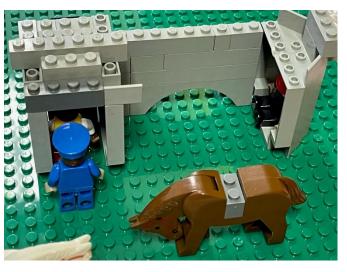
We invite all children to attend Jr. Church and Sunday School. Jr Church meets ~ 9:15 each Sunday. The children attend the first 15 minutes or so of church and then accompany Miss Liz to the Jr. Church Room. (The Bright Beginnings Room). Sunday School meets upstairs in the Sunday School room right across from the stairs. Sunday School starts at 10:15 and ends at 11:00. Please come and join us-join the fun! If you would like more info, please contact Liz Bonner.

Liz Bonner (215) 353-0965 lumceducation@verizon.net









Missions

February Mission Emphasis

The mission emphasis for February supports The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR). UMCOR responds to natural or civil disasters of such magnitude that they overwhelm a community's ability to recover on its own. Through UMCOR, United Methodists extend loving care to people within the United States. When disaster strikes, it is local churches that provide the first response to their communities. This basic understanding—that disaster response is local—forms the foundation for UMCOR's US disaster training and response. When responding to a disaster in the United States, UMCOR provides training, financial assistance, expertise, community collaboration to churches and partners making them more resilient to disasters.

UMCOR is a partner in this work through its support of ACT Alliance relief work in Ukraine as well as in countries receiving refugees outside the country.

Several other relief organizations have been able to increase their work in Ukraine with UMCOR support. In the southwestern part of Ukraine, a long-time UMCOR partner, International Blue Crescent (IBC), reaches people in the Odessa region with food, water and medical supplies. UMCOR support provides 75,000 meals as well as a 2-month supply of food staples for 1000 households in this besieged region. IBC also provides medical supplies to Bolgrad and Artsyz state hospitals based on their urgent needs.

UMCOR has released two emergency grants to the United Methodist Church in Ukraine. According to the district superintendent for the Ukraine/Moldova Provisional Annual Conference, the Rev. Oleg Starodubets, Ukrainian Methodists continue to serve refugees and people struggling in areas under siege.

Global Ministries UMCOR

From Secretary Roland Fernandes- Dear Friends in Mission, Thank you! The dear people that you just helped with your gift to UMCOR may never have the opportunity to meet you, but if they did, I am certain their response would be – Thank you! And through your financial support you are serving within a vital network of interactive relationships in the U.S. and in

more than 60 countries in which UMCOR and partnering agencies engage in direct ministry to persons in need. May we continue to reveal the love of God for men, women, and children of all ethnic, racial, cultural, and national backgrounds to demonstrate the healing power of the gospel with those who suffer.

Supporting Gift Amount UMCOR (Most Needed) \$ 650.00

Eurasia In Mission Together \$ 100.00 UMCOR US Disaster Response \$ 50.00

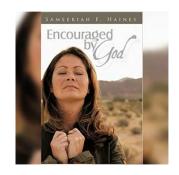
Family Promise Celebrations & Recognition

Last November we housed three families who are experiencing homelessness. We worked with



Family Promise who organizes the housing for families as they are given an opportunity to get back on their feet. Family Promise works with various churches in the area. Each church houses families one month at a time. Then families rotate to the next church for the following month.

Luann Ingram will share about and celebrate our experience of housing families in November 2022. We will also hear from Sue Zomberg, the Community Resource Manager for Family Promise. February 22 you are invited to come to worship to hear about and celebrate this wonderful ministry that is helping families get through a rough time.



Celebrating 2022 End of Year Giving

2022 was a very challenging year for us when it comes to giving to support the ministries God is calling us to offer and share with others through LUMC. Thank you for your faithful giving as you help support and fund vital ministry in and through Lansdale UMC. We saw the first increase in giving from one year to the next in 2022 with giving increasing from 2021. This is the first time this has happened since 2017. We also continue to celebrate God's work in and through our LUMC congregation.

<u>2022 Celebration highlights of God's work and</u> presence

- We worked with Family Promise to house 3 families for the month of November.
- We held the first Vacation Bible School in three years due to Covid cancelations with 17 children and 23 youth and adult volunteer leaders and helpers.
- We celebrated the 150 +1 Anniversary of the founding of First UMC of Lansdale, our official name, and celebrated along with the Lansdale Historical Society. First UMC was the very first church built when the city of Lansdale was established.
- We restarted a community Block Party for our neighborhood along with help from several community organizations, as we offered community resources, free food, and games for children.
- Children and adults represented LUMC as they marched in the Lansdale 150 parade and handed out candy to onlookers.
- We continue to offer both in person and online worship through the faithfulness and expertise of our Tech team.
- We hired a Nursery Attendant to staff the nursery for Sunday morning worship and special events. The Nursery has children 13 out of 22 weeks since we started in August.
- We continue to see children participate in Children's worship and Sunday School.
- We continue to host groups for people who are seeking to overcome addiction.
- We had a crew of 20 people who visited retirement homes and sang Christmas Carols over the Christmas holidays.
- Trustees have led several workdays to improve and repair church facilities throughout the year.
- Eight new people joined as new members.

- Sunday morning worship attendance continues to increase during our second year of post Covid worship.
- We hosted several Red Cross Blood drives throughout the year.
- We provided Christmas gifts to more than 80 children in three different agencies/community groups totaling \$1,350 plus presents.
- We paid our Apportionments to the Eastern PA Conference in full.

We also face some significant challenges

- Building and property challenges include the boiler that provides heat and is more than 40 years old. It continually breaks down. Parts are no longer available, and the boiler needs to be replaced this year.
- Replaced two 20+ year old air-conditioners in 2022. Other air-conditioners will need to be replaced in the coming years.
- Worked on repairing leaks in the basement.
- The roof will need major repairs in the coming years.
- We continue to look for ways to connect with youth and young adults.
- Developing a plan for the use of the building and connecting with community needs now that we no longer have an active preschool meeting here since 2019.

Your faithfulness and generosity have made these ministries and much more possible in 2022. We began 2022 with a challenging budget that we knew was beyond our reach. We took a step of faith as we approved a challenging budget, trusting that a focus on mission and ministry would help us rely on and experience God's faithfulness. God has been faithful, and we have paid all our bills in 2022 even though this also meant dipping into some of our reserves as income still doesn't meet expenses.

We enter 2023 with another very challenging budget with faith and trust that God will continue to work though these ministries to touch and transform lives. We will continue to help meet needs in our communities as we share and proclaim God's grace in Jesus Christ.

District | Conference News



Dear Steward,

May 2023 be a year filled with hope that does not disappoint you. Our congregation have given us hope. We have seen how God is using you to heal, renew and extend the love of Jesus Christ. We have also witnessed the great sacrifices you have been making on behalf of the gospel and the mission and ministry in your community and through EPA. Thank you. Today we want to thank especially all the congregations who have already given 100% of their connectional ministries support and payment of billings. Praise God from whom all blessings flow. We also want to take this opportunity to encourage other congregations to reach 100% and join most of our congregations who are a part of the Wesley Circle (100% giving). For some, this might be a stretch this year to reach 100% and so we ask you to do 5% or better than last year. Demonstrate progress and that God is strengthening you day by day. The Connectional Ministries budget is making a difference in mission throughout EPA and around the world. Normally all 2022 Connectional Ministries and billings would need to be paid by January 15 of 2023; but because the 15th is on a Sunday and the 16th is a holiday, January 17, 2023, is the last day to receive Connectional Ministries giving and billing payments. God is pouring into our hearts grace that is the source of our hope and that will not disappoint us. In 2023 let grace and hope flow from our hearts into the world.

Keep the faith!
Bishop John Schol
Superintendent Evelyn Kent Clark
Superintendent Andrew L Foster III
Superintendent Jennifer Freymoyer
Superintendent Hun Ju Lee

The United Methodists of Eastern Pennsylvania & Greater New Jersey

Next Courageous Dialogue Feb. 7

EPA Conference members will again share their stories with one another and seek common ground. Courageous Dialogues were approved by our 2022 Annual Conference as a series of encounters where clergy and laity can safely share their experiences and ideas through open, guided conversation. The third session—rescheduled from Jan. 30—will occur instead on Feb. 7, at Gretna Glen Camp & Retreat Center in Lebanon. Learn more and register.

3 Tools for Ministry Dates March 2023



EPA has set three March dates and three locations for the 2023 Tools for Ministry church leadership education events. The half-day academies, each offering two sessions of diverse courses, will occur onsite, rather than online, for the first time since 2020. EPA members may attend any Tools session at any location. The South and East districts will host a session together March 4 at Palmer Theological Seminary in St. Davids. The North District will host a session March 11 at Asbury UMC in Allentown. And the West District will host a session March 18 at Church of the Good Shepherd UMC in Lebanon. More information and registration to come. Let Pastor Warner know if you would like to participate in this awesome ministry training event.

Conference and District News

East District News

https://www.epaumc.org/east-district/ea-district-e-alerts/

EPA Conference News https://www.epaumc.org/news

Next Newsletter

The next Circuit Rider newsletter will come out in March. Please send your articles to the church office by February 15, 2023.

Month	Liturgists	Ushers
February		
5	Liz Bonner	Richard Hardisty, Ed Ingram, Ed Hartmann, Gary Silknitter
12	Luann Ingram	Jim Dietterich, Warren Shaedle, Don Dietterich, Todd Harper
19	Michele Dasch	Geri Hare, Michele Dasch, Kathy Kennedy, Maryellen Reinmiller
22		
26	Alex Holnick	Barry McGuire, Neil Hagenbuch, Bob Kennedy, Alan Dickel
March		
5	Luann Ingram	Richard Hardisty, Ed Ingram, Ed Hartmann, Gary Silknitter
12	Liz Bonner	Jim Dietterich, Warren Shaedle, Don Dietterich, Todd Harper
19	Michelle Johnson	Geri Hare, Michele Dasch, Kathy Kennedy, Maryellen Reinmiller
26	Paul Bonner	Barry McGuire, Neil Hagenbuch, Bob Kennedy, Alan Dickel

Are you interested in helping as a Sunday morning Lay Reader who reads the Call to Worship, Opening Prayer and Scripture? Speak with Pastor Warner if you would like to be added to the list of Sunday worship Lay Readers.

Lansdale United Methodist Church

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Email: office@lansdaleumc.org • Website: www.lansdaleumc.org
Office Hours: Mon, Tues, Thur, Fri 9:00 AM- 1:00 PM | Wed 12:00 PM- 4:00 PM

Servants

Ministers – People of God
Bishop John Schol
District Superintendent – Rev. Dr. Andrew Foster

Lead Pastor – Rev. Steward Warner stewwarner@outlook.com 215-990-4581 (cell)

Leadership

Paul Bonner – Lay Leader Kris Neild – Church Council Chair Darren Johnson – Treasurer Bob Kennedy – Trustee President Michelle Johnson – Staff Parish Relations Chair

Staff

Ally Hediger - Administrative Assistant
Liz Bonner - Director of Christian Education
Rays Koshy - Music Director
Ruth Rineer - Organist
Paul Bonner - Custodian
Donna Fritz - Nursery Attendant