

# The Spire



May 2020

Loch Raven United Methodist Church



## Pentecost, the Church's Birthday

Pentecost was originally a Jewish harvest festival when the first fruits of crops were given as offerings to God. On the first Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection, the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus' followers. They were filled with power and love, thus empowering them to witness to God's actions in Christ to all who were nearby. Some 3,000 people responded to their claims that Christ was Lord and Savior of mankind.

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus' first followers on the day of Pentecost is often called the Church's birthday. You can read the entire story in Acts 2.

## Distant But Not Apart

In the second chapter of first letter to the Thessalonians Paul writes in verse 17, "But since we were torn away from you, brothers, for a short time, in person not in heart, we endeavored the more eagerly and with great desire to see you face to face." I know this is the sentiment that we all feel. A feeling of being torn away. I do not believe that anyone would have ever imagined that we would not be able to worship together for a month with potentially more weeks to come. It would be even more unimaginable that we would not be able to worship together on Easter. Even in my college years when I strayed from the faith, I still found my way to a church building on Easter Sunday. To be unable to worship in a church sanctuary on Easter was jarring, but I am comforted by the fact that we still worshipped together and celebrated Easter and Holy Week together online. This pandemic, as tragic as it is, also grounds us to what is truly important. We can worship without a building and we can be connected in isolation.

During the exile, the children of Israel were taken from their land and cut off from the temple. This is when the synagogue came to rise. God called Ezekiel to prophesy hope to those who had been exiled with him, those who felt isolated and cut off from their homeland and from God. We are called to socially distance and that is right. We are called to be six feet apart and that we are not to gather with more than 10 people. We need to be careful about spreading the virus especially because many may have it and not know it. However, as Paul writes, even though we cannot be together in person, we can and must still be together in heart.

So, it is right that we keep our physical distance. However, we are connected by the Spirit. Ephesians 3:16-17 tells us "I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you

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*Electronic Submission:* You may send articles by e-mail to: **njk.williams@yahoo.com** or place articles in the Church Office's newsletter box.

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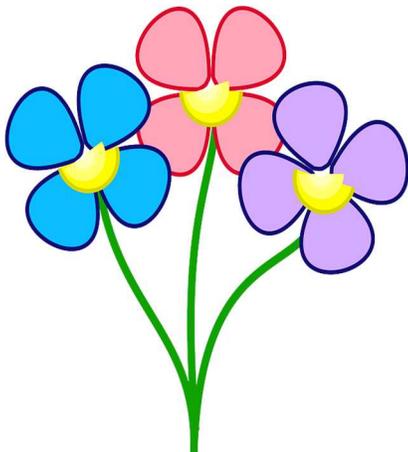
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## Trustees News

As we all go through this challenging time of the COVID-19 coronavirus, we are all continuing to learn new things:

- We know that this is impacting some in our congregation harder than others. Maybe that is loss of job or pay, maybe that is illness, or maybe that is general anxiety about being unable to get out to get what you need. Maybe you are one of the doctors, nurses, grocery store workers, and others who are getting out every day to help the rest of us. Directly or indirectly, all of us are impacted.
- We know that the cost of running the church does not stop during this crisis. Expenses like payroll, BGE, Verizon, and many others still need to be paid, just like at our own homes.
- We know that Trustees has been planning for multiple repairs (roof, painting, etc.). We would like to continue since the building is pretty open, those vendors also need work and we have committed to many of them by accepting their contracts before this situation hit.
- We know that, while continuing with repairs makes sense, the income to the church has dropped somewhat while we are not meeting as a congregation. And other needs, such as missions and supporting food banks and other initiatives are also a critical need in our community at this time. So, we anticipate that the pace of repairs might be slowed somewhat.
- We are asking that, if it is possible, you could mail a check to the church for your offering. Or, maybe this is the time when you decide to sign up for regular weekly payments to the church right from your bank account.
- If you currently pledge, in the past week you should have received your quarterly report. With that was a note from Phil Lee explaining how to request online payment. If you want to enroll in online payment, the easiest way is to go to the church website, [www.lrumc.org](http://www.lrumc.org), and click on the dedicated direct link to VANCO.

Please stay safe and healthy. And, if you can, please give prayerful consideration to giving to the church at least a portion of your usual giving.



## Missions In Action: What's It All About

*Jesus Sends His Apostles on a Mission: Jesus called his twelve followers together. He gave them power over evil spirits and power to heal every kind of disease and sickness. Matthew 10:1*

What is a mission? The dictionary defines it as:

1. an important assignment carried out for political, religious, or commercial purposes, typically involving travel.
  - a group of people sent on a mission.
  - an organization or institution involved in a long-term assignment in a foreign country.
2. the vocation or calling of a religious organization, especially a Christian one, to go out into the world and spread its faith.
3. a strongly felt aim, ambition, or calling.

Through your talents, gifts, and service to the church, you too are a missionary even if you don't travel far from home—especially during this time of sheltering in place. Your own mission in life can be anything you pursue with passion and enthusiasm. Your efforts can really change the world for the better. What will you do?

We on the missions committee thank you for your support and help with our various projects. And we especially thank you CHURCH for staying in touch with one another, for helping by running errands, shopping, and cooking for your fellow members and most importantly by PRAYING and CARING for one another.

Jesus told this story in Matthew 25:35-40

*<sup>35</sup> . . . When I was thirsty, you gave me something to drink. When I had no place to stay, you welcomed me into your home.*

*<sup>36</sup> When I was without clothes, you gave me something to wear. When I was sick, you cared for me. When I was in prison, you came to visit me.*

*<sup>37</sup> Then the godly people will answer, Lord, when did we see you hungry and give you food? When did we see you thirsty and give you something to drink? <sup>38</sup> When did we see you with no place to stay and welcome you into our home? When did we see you without clothes and give you something to wear? <sup>39</sup> When did we see you sick or in prison and care for you?*

*<sup>40</sup> Then the king will answer, The truth is, anything you did for any of my people here, you also did for me.*

## Distant But Not Apart

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may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love.” We do not need to be physically connected to stay spiritually connected to God and to be connected by heart. As we continue to worship, study, and pray together online or on the phone God continues to strengthen us. These are difficult times to be sure and this is the time where we need our faith and our brothers and sisters in Christ more than ever. However, with all that said, to quote Paul, “we endeavored the more eagerly and with great desire to see you face to face.”

Grace & Peace,  
Pastor George





## Bible Quiz

In Jeremiah 18, God told Jeremiah to go down to the potter's house. Jeremiah obeyed. The potter was forming a vessel of clay on his wheel, but he accidentally ruined it. He reformed the clay into a lump and started over.

He worked the clay again until he had a vessel that seemed good to him.

Jeremiah, the Lord's prophet, discerned that God was using the occasion as a lesson regarding individuals and nations. What was the lesson?

- A. God can do individuals and nations great good if they yield themselves to God's will.
- B. God doesn't really care in the long run whether people obey him or not.
- C. God's judgment doesn't really matter.
- D. If things don't work out well the first time, you can always try again.

The answer is found in Jeremiah 18:1-10.



## United Methodist Women April Schedule

*Tentative Schedule  
Dependent on Social  
Distancing Restrictions*

### Phyllis Downes Circle

Monday, May 4  
10:00 a.m.—Parlor  
Lesson 9

### “Women in Christ” Circle

Monday, May 4  
7:00 p.m.—Room 202  
Study: *Becoming Women of Purpose*  
Lesson 7—Exercising  
Discipline for a Purpose  
Study: Judy  
Devotions: Judy  
Hostess: Joann

**NO GENERAL MEETING**

## UMW Easter Egg Fundraiser

Unfortunately our chocolate covered Easter egg fundraiser has been cancelled. Your payment may be counted as a donation to the UMW or refunded. Please inform Nancy Gillotti of your wishes. We hope to do a candy fundraiser in the Fall as the Easter egg fundraiser is an important part of raising funds for various mission projects supported by the UMW. Thank you for your continued support!

## UMC Lectionary Calendar Year A – May, 2020

*Older Adult Recognition Day: any day in May  
Christian Home Month*

### May 3 – Fourth Sunday of Easter

Church Color: White

Acts 2:42-47

Psalm 23 (UMH 754 or 137)

1 Peter 2:19–25

John 10:1–10

*May 7: National Day of Prayer*

### May 10 – Fifth Sunday of Easter, Mother's Day; Festival of the Christian Home

Church Color: White

Acts 7:55-60

Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16  
(UMH 764)

1 Peter 2:2–10

John 14:1–14

### May 17 – Sixth Sunday of Easter, Heritage Sunday

Church Color: White

Acts 17:22-31

Psalm 66:8–20 (UMH 790)

1 Peter 3:13–22

John 14:15–21

*May 18-19: Change the World  
Weekend*

### May 21: Ascension of the Lord

Acts 1:1-11

Psalm 47 (UMH 781)

Ephesians 1:15-23

Luke 24:44-53

### May 24 – Seventh Sunday of Easter

Church Color: White

Acts 1:6-14

Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35  
(UMH 792)

1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11

John 17:1-11

*Aldersgate Day/Heritage  
Sunday*

*May 25: Memorial Day*

### May 31 – Day of Pentecost

Church Color: Red

Acts 2:1-21

Psalm 104:24-34, 35b  
(UMH 826)

1 Corinthians 12:3b-13

John 7:37–39



Memorial Day emerged from the grim shadows of the American Civil War. Before the close of the war, women began decorating the graves of soldiers who had died in that war. The practice quickly spread, and a few years later May 30, 1868 was designated as Decoration Day—a day for placing flowers on the graves of Union and Confederate soldiers throughout the United States.

In 1882, Decoration Day became known as Memorial Day, and soldiers who died in other wars were also honored. Over the years, it has become a day when all loved ones who have died—in war or otherwise—are remembered. In 1971, the United States Congress declared Memorial Day a national holiday to be observed annually on the last Monday in May.

On this Memorial Day, remember those who gave their lives for our country. But also pray for those who continue serving to keep America free, especially those who are in harm's way.



## IN TOUCH MINISTRY

### Special Prayer Requests

Please refer to insert in Sunday bulletins for up-to-date information.

**Stay in Touch** with some of our members who are not able to regularly attend church. Contact the church office for up-to-date information.

### May Birthdays

- 2 James Yeich
- 6 Beverly Lambe
- 8 Janet Gaver
- 11 Samantha Shelton
- 12 Steve Webster
- 13 Sara Priebe  
Justin Thompson
- 15 Adrian Palazzi
- 17 Linda Jones  
Cathy Miles
- 21 Patti Ferguson  
Melva Scruggs
- 22 David Cole  
Jonathan Cuthbert
- 27 Melvin Alaeze

## Assurance of the Ascension

After the Resurrection, the risen Lord instructed his followers not to leave Jerusalem. It was there, Jesus said, that they would receive “the promise of the Father” (Acts 1:4, NRSV). What was that promise? It was that they would be baptized not with water but with the Holy Spirit.

Shortly after that utterance, Jesus was “lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight” (v. 9).

The Ascension reminds us that even though Jesus isn’t physically present on earth, as the living Christ, he is as near as we allow him to be.

Jesus’ Ascension offers us the assurance that God is now available to all people all the time. He lives as a guiding, loving Spirit in our midst.

## Membership Updates

Contact the church office for up-to-date information.