

# Mt. Lebanon United Methodist Church



Sharing the Love of Christ

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Reverend Thomas Q. Strandburg, Pastor tstrandburg@mlumc.org

March 27, 2022

8:30 & 10:45

## The Fourth Sunday in Lent

The parable of the prodigal son is famous. In it, Jesus is showing us how God relates to us: when our choices put distance between us and God, God waits eagerly with open arms for us to come to our senses and turn back to God..

### WE GATHER IN GOD'S NAME ...

\*Asterisk indicates to stand as able

**Prelude**

*Soul Adorn Thyself With Gladness*

Johannes Brahms

Debra Artim, guest organist

### Announcements

#### \*Call to Worship

Pastor: Let this be a welcoming place, a place of return.

**People: Let it be built by a love that bends towards those who return here.**

Pastor: It is a love that has been waiting like a candle in the window, lighting the way back, and never willing to let go.

**People: In the hope that each child will return home.**

Pastor: Let this be a place where the only appropriate response to the return of the lost...

**People: ...is to feast and celebrate and prepare the party. For that which has been lost has returned!**

### ... TO GIVE PRAISE TO GOD ...

\*Opening Hymn

"Lord God, your love has called us here" (vv.1,3,5)

UMH579

**\*Opening Prayer (in unison)**

O God, just as there is a bit of the prodigal in each person, the elder brother from the parable is too often present in the church. It is no secret that some people hesitate to join church because of the ways that some of us have treated newcomers. Forgive us, Lord, for our lack of hospitality toward strangers. Forgive us, Lord, for any ways that we make it difficult for new people to find comfortable space in our congregation. Forgive us, Lord, for jealousy and infighting. Teach us, Lord, how to receive people whose sins haven't been made public. Teach us, Lord, how to make our circles large enough to include others. Teach us, Lord, how to love each other beyond any faults we may see. Amen.

**\*Silent Prayer**

**Response**

*Gloria Patri*

UMH71

**A Lesson for Young Disciples (10:45)**

*All children are invited to come forward at the invitation of the pastor. After the children's message at the 10:45 service, children ages 3 - 3<sup>rd</sup> grade may attend Kids Praise. Children will be escorted to and from Kids Praise by teachers. They will return to the sanctuary near the end of the service. The congregation will sing, as the children depart:*

*Tell me the stories of Jesus I love to hear; Things I would ask him to tell me if he were here:  
Scenes by the wayside, tales of the sea, Stories of Jesus, tell them to me. (UMH#277, stanza 1)*

**... TO HEAR GOD'S WORD PROCLAIMED ...**

**Scripture Reading**

**A Lesson from the Gospel of Luke**

Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

The Parable of the Prodigal Son

**Response**

**Leader:** The Word of the Lord.

**People:** Thanks be to God.

**Pastoral Prayer**

**The Lord's Prayer**

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

**Sermon**

“The Parable of the Really Awful Son”

Rev. Scott Miller

... TO OFFER OUR GIFTS AND TO DEDICATE OUR LIVES ...

**At the Offertory**

8:30 “My faith looks up to thee”

UMH452

10:45 “O Love Divine, what has thou done?” from *Wesley Songs*

Glenn Rudolph  
Kirby Dilworth, Soloist

**\*Doxology**

“Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow”

UMH95

**\*Prayer of Dedication**

... TO GO REJOICING IN GOD’S NAME!

**\*Closing Hymn**

“Amazing grace! How sweet the sound” (vv.1-3,6)

UMH378

**\*Benediction**

**\*Postlude**

*Sonata in F major*

C. Oh. E. Bach

Today’s Services

**The flowers on the altar** are given in honor of DIA (Dames in Action) and their faithful support of missions to the congregation.

**The flowers on the Brookline altar** are given by Mary Garber in honor of those fighting for freedom in Ukraine, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. Prayers are asked for the Methodist congregations in those countries.

**Acolytes** Jacob Lowe and Lucas Giles      **Cross Bearer** Alan Chesleigh

**Honor or remember a loved one with a flower donation.** The flowers that grace the sanctuary each week are generously donated by our church family members. This is a great way to honor or memorialize a special person, event, or milestone in your personal life or in the life of the church. To donate flowers on a particular Sunday, contact Lizzie Diller , 412-860-3614. The cost is \$33 for the altar, narthex, or columbarium arrangements, and \$66 for the chancel flowers.

## Today's Scriptures

### Luke 15.1-3,11b-32

Now all the tax-collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, 'This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.'

So he told them this parable:

Then Jesus\* said, 'There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, "Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me." So he divided his property between them. A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and travelled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled himself with\* the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, "How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.' " So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son."\*' But the father said to his slaves, "Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!" And they began to celebrate.

'Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. He replied, "Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound." Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. But he answered his father, "Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!" Then the father\* said to him, "Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found."'

**Podcasts of Sunday Sermons** Catch up on messages from MLUMC. Pastor Tom Strandburg and Pastor Scott Miller contribute podcasts of Sunday sermons on a rotating basis. Sermons can be found at <http://mlumc.buzzsprout.com> or navigate to the site from the link on our webpage, [www.mlumc.org](http://www.mlumc.org). Sermons also will be posted to iTunes. Full recordings of the service are available upon request.

## **Keep in Prayer**

### **Convalescing in Care Facilities**

Carolyn Dagg, Baptist Home  
May Frederick, Baptist Home  
Anne Hoffman, Friendship Village  
Mark Lewis, Sunrise, Upper St. Clair  
George Lindow, Friendship Village  
Priscilla Utzig, Providence Point

### **Convalescing at Home**

Shirley Baker, Bishop George Bashore,  
Jean Boyer, Susan Lichtenfels,  
John Middleton, Carol Van Sickle

### **In the Military**

Jason Boyer, SPC Natalie Brown,  
PFC William Dilla III  
Maj. Zachary Allen Finch, USMC,  
James Iantelli, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Jaskiewicz  
Maj. Zachary Allen Finch, USMC,  
James Iantelli, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Jaskiewicz,  
S. Sgt. Keith Kimmell, Sgt. Brendan  
Lampert, Matt Lewis, USMC,  
Sgt. Matthew McConahan, Thomas Orda,  
David Poncel, Sgt. Steven Reitz,  
LTC Scott B. Rushe,  
Pvt. Max Siergert, USMC  
Pastor Rick Townes, Maj. Azizi Wesmiller,  
Maj. Matthew C. Wesmiller,  
Sgt. Keith Scott Winkowski,  
Sgt Michael Zimmerman

**Lenten Prayer Services Thursdays, 6:45 in the Sanctuary** The Liturgy of Evening Prayer will be offered on the following Thursday nights from 6:45 - 7:30 pm in the Sanctuary - March 31, and April 7. You are welcome to attend either in-person or remotely, the service will be livestreamed on our website, Facebook and YouTube

## Holy Week and Easter Services

### **Maundy Thursday, April 14**

7:30 pm **Tenebrae** Service in Sanctuary

### **Good Friday, April 15**

7:30 pm **Good Friday Service** in Sanctuary

### **Holy Saturday, April 16**

7:30 pm **Easter Vigil** Service in Wesley  
Patio & Wesley Hall

The traditional Easter Vigil is by far the oldest of all services of worship in the Christian tradition, having been held since the earliest days of our faith. Since the beginning, the service has always begun outdoors, with the lighting of a fire from whose flames the Paschal or Christ Candle is lit.

Traditionally, the vigil would last through the night. We won't go that far! Our abbreviated vigil will be 45 minutes or less in length, rain or shine.

### **Easter Sunday, April 17**

7 am **Outdoor Sunrise Service** on  
Wesley Patio, Rain location -  
Wesley Hall

8:30 am **Traditional Worship** in the  
Sanctuary

9:30 am **The Gathering** in Asbury  
Center

10:45 am **Traditional Worship** in the  
Sanctuary

## COMMUNITY FISH FRY DINNER

FRIDAY, APRIL 15 4-7 PM

ASBURY CENTER

DINE-IN OR TAKE-OUT

Good Friday Fish Fry – The  
Tradition Continues



This year's Good Friday Fish Fry will be on Friday, April 15<sup>th</sup>, from 4pm to 7pm. As has been the case in prior years, there will be no charge for the meal, although donations will be accepted. Both eat-in and take out will be offered, as well as limited delivery to Food Pantry clients. Safety protocols will be in place to ensure that all are comfortable, notwithstanding the continuing presence of COVID 19.

As was the case in 2021, pre-packaged communion elements and a written message from Pastor Tom will be provided to those who wish to have them. Included with the message will be instructions as to how to take the elements. Offering communion will again be a great enhancement to the overall experience.

Although the menu has not yet been finalized, expect staples such as Cod (baked or fried), French fries, Cole slaw, Macaroni and Cheese, and Hush Puppies. More specifics will be provided on the menu in the coming weeks.

We plan to feed the masses on Good Friday and hope you will be among them. Thank you in advance for your support of this special Lenten event.

Rob Spicher, Community Events and Outreach Committee Chair

## UPDATED COVID RECOMMENDATIONS

With the recent change to CDC masking recommendations, the Church Council asks that everyone make a decision for mask wearing based on their own personal needs. Therefore, masking is now optional in the large common spaces in our church, including for services of worship. Please extend grace and understanding to those who need to continue masking due to health concerns for themselves or those they care for. Due to the more confined spaces in our Educational Building, we ask that all of our children, youth, and teachers come to Sunday School prepared to mask, as circumstances warrant. Other small groups may make similar decisions for themselves, and Council supports them wholeheartedly.

### CALENDAR – SUNDAY, MARCH 27 THRU SATURDAY, APRIL 2

#### SUNDAY 3/27

8:30 am	Worship	Sanner Chapel
8:30 am	The Gathering	Asbury
9:30 am	Sunday School	Various
10:45 am	Worship	Sanctuary
4:00 pm	Youth Pretzel Making	Asbury
7:00 pm	Scout PLC	Wesley

#### TUESDAY 3/29

6:00 pm	Terrific Tuesday	Asbury
7:00 pm	Troop 23 Meeting	Wesley
7:00 pm	Troop 9023 Meeting	Network

#### WEDNESDAY 3/30

2:00 pm	Women's Bible Study	Zoom
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#### THURSDAY 3/31

6:45 pm	Lenten Prayer Service	Sanctuary
7:30 pm	Chancel Choir Rehearsal	Sanner Chapel