



Lexington United Methodist Church
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Visit www.lexingtonumc.org for more information.



Dear LUMC Family,

In his great book, *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis*, church historian Mark Noll contends that a critical thread that led to the Civil War was the inability to answer the question "Does the Bible condemn or condone slavery?" (The answer should be a resounding yes in condemning slavery, but that's another topic).

A dig into 19th-century theology will show how very bright thinkers who started with the same point, scripture, reached two drastically different conclusions. It's one of the reasons I point to it often to help people see that the Bible isn't as black-and-white and cut-and-dry as we make it. The ambiguity in the narration and meaning, alongside the distance between us and the scripture, makes interpretation possible for us in the 21st century. It is both our biggest blessing and biggest stumbling block. Maybe you've heard a familiar scripture preached in a new way, and it's like a little light bulb went off in your life. Or you're in a Bible study talking about a passage, and everyone has a different interpretation, but they all seem right and uplifting. It's what St. Augustine envisioned when he said that the correct interpretation of scripture is like a path that always leads us back to the love of God and our neighbor. On the other end of that, maybe you've seen the scripture taken in a way where you go, 'there's no way that is correct'. The TV "Preacher" who says if you just send in 20 more dollars, you'll be healed because of your faithfulness.

We all know of texts that are more than what they seem on the surface. Leviticus 19:19 is my go-to example, "Keep my decrees...Do not wear clothing woven of two kinds of material." Does the Bible prohibit all blending of fabrics? Am I sinning if I wear a polycotton blend? Well, if we read things merely at a surface level the answer might be yes. But we should know that we always ought to dig deeper than the surface.

I say all this because, more and more as I pastor in the world, I think one of our biggest struggles and one of the biggest things that leads us to the divisiveness we see today is our inability to dig beyond the surface. So much of this has to do with how we consume media, both social media and news media.

For me, the news and social media events over the last few years have broken my heart. Political violence, mass shootings led by hate, war, persecution, and a rise in civil division and anger among us. Even over the last few weeks, our world has been captivated by the events taking place in Minnesota centered around ICE. Not only that, but it seems like so much of that social and news media is one-sided, arguing over the events that took place, how to understand and interpret them.

I'm struck by how we, as people, can look at the same event and see two very different things. The philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein (say that three times fast) gave the great example of this, 'Duck Rabbit'. Look at the picture below. Is it a duck or a rabbit? Well, it depends. He used this picture to illustrate "aspect perception," the idea that the same unchanging data can be perceived as two different things.

What can we do in the face of

1. Be Conscious. The best piece of advice I received as a pastor was, "Consider the source." Where is this coming from? I would contend that one of the biggest worldly sources that is affecting us negatively is the media we consume. Both news media and social media. Our formation is more often boiled down to short pictures and infographics we can share on Facebook and Instagram. They often don't come from reputable news sources, but the "we had [insert political name] fan page. The media is for our entertainment more than our education.

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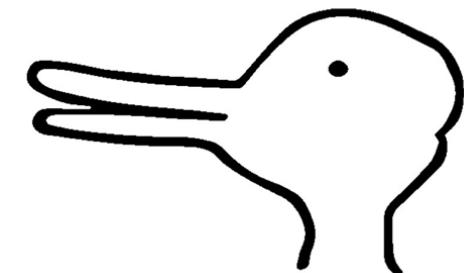
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2. Be curious. One of the best practices we can adopt is to be curious about others' experiences, perceptions, and beliefs. To wonder how and why someone who thinks differently than I do got there. We will find we have more common ground than we expect.

3. Be Christlike. When we struggle with how to understand and interpret what's going on in the world, we ought to turn to scripture. The great theologian Karl Barth said we ought to have the newspaper in one hand and the bible in the other. When something happens in our world, we ought not turn on the news to see what our favorite pundit thinks, or get our opinion from some social media page we've never heard of. Instead, we ought to turn to the way of Jesus, which calls us to be people of love, peace, grace, joy, and kindness in the world. If our opinions, political or not, don't lead us to the fruits of the spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23), then it is of the world, not of Christ.

In the midst of a divided and broken world, may we, the church, be a living example of a different kind of way.

Blessings, Pastor Chris



Easter Lilies Orders for Easter Sunday are due by Sunday, February 23rd. Orders can be placed by filling out a form and either placing it in the offering plate or returning it to the church office. Lilies are \$13 per plant and are purchased from Down Home Ranch.

Scholarship Applications

High School Seniors—The school has posted the Lexington United Methodist Church Scholarship Application. If you have questions please get with your counselor or Holly Newton.

Applications are due by April 25th.

A Gift was given to Lexington UMC

In memory of Lois Boyd

by... Sally & Amanda Lomax & Holly Miller

In memory of Lois Boyd

by... Annette Woodward

"...I thank God for you—the God I serve with a clear conscience, just as my ancestor did. Night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers."

2 Timothy 1:3

To make a memorial write "memorial" in the memo line of your check and place it in the offering plate or mail it to the church office.





Monday, February 9th
10:30-1:30
in the Family Life Center
will be the Soup and Bread lunch for the Lexington Backpack Buddies program.
\$15—Soup, salad, bread & Dessert. Dine in or Carry out.
Each church has been asked to make a Soup!
Please contact Terri Nolker if you are able to bring a Soup, Bread or Dessert! (512) 964-5411

Free-Will Spaghetti Dinner
Ash Wednesday—February 18th
6PM in the Family Life Center
Hosted by the Youth to raise money towards summer camp.
Spaghetti, Salad, Bread, Dessert and Tea



3—Haddie Mae Newton
5—Stephen Meuth
5—Matthew Turner
6—Tripp Kellenberger
6—Stacey Stover
7—Rhyder Taizan
9—Kayla Janda
9—Kenn Miller
9—Tanner Retzlaff
11—George Wacha
16—Garrett Gerdes
16—Jennifer Marek
23—John Johnson
25—Chase Ahrendt
27—Geri Meuth
28—Janie Johnson
28—Mike Stefek



We are starting to accept Easter Egg Hunt Donations. We are looking for little stuffed animals, bubbles, play-doh, kites, slime, chalk, cups, jump ropes, frisbees, balls or anything you think the kids would enjoy!

Total Monthly Offerings for December were **\$25,722.**

Thank you for continuing to send in your tithes!
Ways of sending in your monetary gifts:
1. **At Church:** during service, at the church office, or the drop box on the office door.
2. **Online:** www.lexingtonumc.org on the "donate" page.
3. **Mail or Bill Pay** (through your bank):
Po Box 116 Lexington, TX 78947
4. QR Code



The Central Texas Food Bank is bringing free, healthy food to Lexington! Every month held at the Lexington City Park at 10 a.m.. If you know of anyone who would benefit from this program please let them know. This month's mobile food pantry is **Tuesday, February 3rd.**



M&M's and Youth are back on Wednesdays! M&M's will be from 3:50 to 5:30PM

Middle School Youth will be from 3:30 to 5:30PM and High School Youth will be from 6 to 7PM.

If you are interested in volunteering for either program, please let the office know.



M&M & Youth WISH LIST

Chips, Cookies, Hawaiian Punch, Grape Kool-Aid, Welch's Fruit Snacks, Apple Sauce and Pudding cups. **Individual Packages are appreciated.



Weekly Emails
If you'd like to be added to the weekly email please send your e-mail address to:
Lexingtonunitedmethodistchurch@outlook.com
Or call the office at (979) 773-2728.

On Communion Sunday's (the first Sunday of the month), we take a special offering at the rail for the **St. Stephen's Fund**. This money is used to help those in need in our community. With this fund, we help people in emergency situations and those that may need some help with their utilities.



Sunday Morning @ LUMC

Sunday School 10:30-11:15 a.m.

Men's Gathering; meet in the 2nd classroom with leader, John Gibbs

Journey Class for Adults; meet in the 1st Classroom