

Lynnewood Lines

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF LYNNEWOOD UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

ISSUE: 1
FEB 2026



In this newsletter:

Pastor Jenn's Letter

Worship Series - Lent

Music Notes from Amelia and Michael

Corey's Family Ministry Letter

Member Letter - Jay Roadarmel

Small Group Spotlight - Prayers and Squares

Small Group Info - Check out the New Groups!

Contacts

Pastor Jenn's Letter to the Congregation

As I sat down to write this morning, the third verse of Isaac Watts' hymn, When I Survey the Wondrous Cross, came to my mind.

See from his head, his hands, his feet, sorrow and love flow mingled down.
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet, or thorns compose so rich a crown?

I've always loved the image of sorrow and love mingled together and flowing from Jesus' heart. Anywhere that love and sorrow for the world meet, Christ is present. I don't think we can be fully alive without experiencing both; and often at the same time. Many of us are experiencing the world as a place of bad news and sorrow these days. There is much that is troubling. But, I think we often get stuck there. We allow our sorrow and distress to weigh down our hearts, to occupy our minds, and sap our spiritual energy. But, what if our sorrow could be a reminder to us of what we love and why? What if our sorrow could call us to love more deeply, more daringly and with greater peace?

I think Jesus faced the trials of Holy Week and his cross with conviction and peace because his love outweighed his sorrow. His sorrow over exclusion compelled him to welcome the woman at the well. His sorrow over pain and illness led him to heal the blind man and help a paralyzed man walk. And his sorrow over our greed and sin sent him to Zaccheus' house with a message of mercy and redemption. Jesus' sorrow always led him to love more deeply. Could we learn to do this too?

This Lent, let's return to the radical good news of God. Let's pray with greater intention. Let's sing with greater enthusiasm. Let's share, give, and grow into the love that flows toward us and through us, even now. The world is full of sorrow AND the world is full of love. The good news is...love wins. Let's live from that truth.

In Christ's love,



Pastor Jenn



Lenten Worship Series @Lynnewood: Tell Me Something Good

In week we will enter the season of Lent.

Originally, this liturgical season was a time to prepare new converts for baptism on Easter Sunday.

"Tell me something good... tell me that you love me", so goes a famous song by Chaka Khan and Rufus. We long to hear good news, don't we? We long to know that we are loved, cherished and not alone.



Good news is the heart and spirit of Jesus. Good news is what our faith is all about. In a world of hurt and confusion, Jesus is still good news. That is what we will celebrate during this season of Lent. Jesus' ministry can be described as "radical" meaning "root" or "ground." As we prepare for Easter, we will ground ourselves in the essence of Jesus' life and teaching. We'll go back to our roots – and maybe we'll hear the good news as if it were the very first time. Together, we will remember that Jesus offers surprising joy, radical welcome, mercy, abundance, care for the vulnerable, forgiveness, and unending growth and new life. This is good news for all!

- Feb. 18:** Ash Wednesday - The good news is...all are invited
- Feb. 22:** The good news is...so good it catches us by surprise
- March 1:** The good news is...great love for God and neighbor - Holy Communion
- March 8:** The good news is...together, the impossible is possible
- March 15:** The good news is...protection and care for the vulnerable
- March 22:** The good news is...rooted in justice, mercy and faithfulness
- March 29:** Palm Sunday - The good news is...inspiring us to act
- April 2:** Maundy Thursday - The good news is...even Judas gets his feet washed
- April 3:** The good news is...revealed through nonviolence
- April 5:** Easter Sunday - The good news is...alive in the world

Lenten Prayer Practice Group - Sundays February 22-March 15 (10:45-11:45)
Sign up in the courtyard after worship or online!

Music Notes

Kia Ora!

I just got back from Aotearoa (New Zealand) and boy are my little kiwi wings tired!

Some of you may know that I was on tour with my group, Singers Marin, in New Zealand. We had the opportunity to sing a couple formal concerts, but the most rewarding part of being on such a tour is the opportunity to share music. We visited Te Puia, a presentation of traditional Maori music by warriors and maidens alike. An expert helped us sing in Te Reo, the language of the Maori people. We sang drinking songs in the Hobbit pub from the Lord of the Rings films! (Bucket list CHECK...) We shared music.

And the one I want to mention most here is the Taongo Pūoro, the sharing of Maori instruments we were honored to take part in. More than just a demonstration of cultural music, Jo 'el shared with us twenty years of collecting and rebuilding his people's heritage. He sometimes struggled for an appropriately descriptive word, then spoke it in Maori to his young son who found an English equivalent. They played for us on handmade instruments, improvising not on a scale or tune, but by listening to the 'breath of the land.' Later, I asked his colleague if the instruments could be tuned to a western scale. "No," he said. "It's without tonal center, without written form. It just exists within our breath." Finally, Jo 'el and his son demonstrated a proper greeting in Maori: by putting foreheads and noses together and truly sharing a breath.

This breath of the land, world, people...that's what I went to New Zealand to find. Also, some Hobbit holes.

Breathe on me, Breath of God
fill me with life anew
that I may love the way you love
and do what you would do

Michael

FEBRUARY SPECIAL OFFERING

NEGRO SPIRITUAL ROYALTIES FUND

WRITE OR SELECT "SPECIAL OFFERING"

**HONORING THE CULTURAL
HERITAGE AND AUTHORSHIP
OF AFRICAN AMERICAN
SPIRITUAL MUSIC**



This February, our designated special offering will go towards our Negro Spiritual Royalties Fund.

Traditional Negro Spirituals were composed by individuals who have not historically been awarded royalties for the performance or purchase of their music. We adopted this royalties initiative back in 2022 as a way to "pay it forward" and support this art form and the development of young Black musicians. Thus far, we have sent donations to the Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir, whose mission "is to inspire joy and unity among all people through Black gospel and spiritual music traditions."

In 2025, we used 14 Negro Spiritual titles in our worship services as well as Lift Every Voice and Sing, which is often referred to as the Black national anthem. If you would like to support the Spirituals Royalties initiative, please mark "Spirituals Royalties Fund" on your February special offering. You may also designate your offerings to Music Ministries Outreach Expenditure at any time of the year for contributions towards our royalties fund.

We will send a royalties donation to the Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir at the beginning of March. Thank you for your support in continuing the tradition of the Negro Spiritual.

Amelia Han Riegert

Worship Music Coordinator & Principal Accompanist
amelia@lynnewood.org

Family Ministry

Lost and Found: My Pew

Growing up, I went to church almost every Sunday with my Nana and Pops. We sat in the same pew, in the same seats every single Sunday. It was the pew they had been sitting in for decades. To me, those same seats and view was church. It was all I knew. It was my safe space to be a kid, get candy that Pops sneaked to us, draw on the offering card, and be in the presence of my loving Creator. The older I grew, the more I loved that pew. By the time I left for college, that pew was one of the safest and most beloved spaces in my world. I was completely loved there. In college, I struggled to find my pew again. Everywhere I went, I had the feeling that this is not my pew and this is not church. Church was supposed to be in the pew I sat in for 18 years in between Nana and Pops. I could not spiritually, mentally, and emotionally find my pew. Then Pops died. My sense of that pew, of church drifted farther away. Now my church was just me, Nana, and this uncomfortable pew (even though I rarely had the chance to ever sit in it).

I worked at several churches, worshipped at even more, but I still struggled to find my pew. I still felt loved and in the presence of God, no matter what church I was in. It just was not the same. It was not my pew and my home church. Then Nana passed away. Now it was just me and this old wooden pew. That is all that was left. My home church, my sense of belonging, everything I loved and constantly searched for was gone. Except for that old pew. I went back home for her funeral. I sat alone, in the empty church in that pew. That old wooden pew still covered with all the marks I made as a kid taught me a life changing lesson. In that moment I felt every emotion. I felt loved, safe, vulnerable, lost, and in pain. I felt Nana and Pops with me. Their spirits were there. My church came rushing back to me. That old pew taught me that I may have lost them, I may have lost my sense of church, but I had actually gained church. In that moment I was able to transcend that old pew and realize that I had been sitting in that pew, in between Nana and Pops every moment of my entire life. No matter how spiritually far I drifted away from God. No matter how physically far away I was from that pew. I was still in it with Nana and Pops. I simply had to expand my mind and open my soul to see and feel it.



Friends, even if you can not find your pew right now, it is all good. There is always room on my pew next to Nana and Pops. Join me. It is a glorious old pew. Who knows, Pops might sneak you a piece of candy.

Member Letter

A few years ago Pastor Jenn shared a devotion talking about how we might make someone feel welcome. She walked through different demographics of persons like a six year old, a teenager, a new Mom, an elderly couple. As she gave each example, we gave spirited responses based upon our experiences. Then she asked about “our new neighbor from China” and the room went silent. So in the spirit of getting to know our neighbors, and making them feel welcome, here are some questions we might ask. Pick a safe person you already know and test-drive these. I chose Kiran.

Icebreakers (These work even if someone was born in the US)

How long have you lived in the Tri-Valley?

What do you like most about this neighborhood so far?

Where did you grow up?



Culture & Daily Life (Only if someone tells you they are from another country)

Are there any foods you really miss?

Is there a dish you really love cooking or eating from your culture?

Are there any holidays you look forward to each year?

Are there any unique church traditions you'd like to share?

Language

What languages did you grow up speaking? Kiran says it's called a “mother-tongue” in India.

How do you pronounce your name?

Does your name have a meaning?

Are there any words that don't translate well in English?



Positive Comparisons (Avoid Better/Worse)

What's something you were surprised by when you moved here?

What's something from home you wish more people knew about?

Is there anything from your home country you'd love to see more of here—food, music, traditions?

Kid Safe / Family Friendly

What did you enjoy doing for fun growing up?

Were there any games or traditions you loved as a kid?



Jay Roadarmel

Small Group Spotlight

Prayers and Squares

In 2001, Lynn Gatehouse discovered an organization called Prayers and Squares and established Chapter 23 at Lynnewood. Jane Bishop took the lead with Julia Roth joining her as co-leader shortly after. In approximately 2015, Michele O'Hair stepped into Julia's role. The motto of Prayers and Squares is "It's not about the quilt, it's all about the prayers." The quilts are not finished until the congregation has tied the knots and said prayers for those receiving this tangible comfort and warmth filled with the love and prayers of the Lynnewood community. To date over 300 quilts have been gifted to those in our community and those who have been helped by Mission in Service teams in our state, across the US and other countries. We have sewn about 80 pouches for The California-Nevada Disaster Assistance UMCOR program and about 100 cloth masks at the beginning of the Covid 19 pandemic.

While it has been our joy and privilege to participate in this ministry, Jane Bishop and Michele O'Hair have made the decision to step down as co-leaders of Prayers and Squares. Each quilt has truly been a team effort and we are grateful to all of you who have participated in this ministry over the last 25 years. Together, we have sewn, ironed, put in ties, hand sewn bindings, made labels and all of you who said prayers as you tied a knot.

If you are interested in learning more about Prayers and Squares or considering taking a leadership role, please contact Michele, Jane or the church office.

"Sew" grateful,
Michele and Jane



Small Groups



Dare to Question

A Monday night Bible study. Join this group every Monday at 7 P.M. to read and discuss thought-provoking books and other topics. All are welcome to join! Meetings are over Zoom. ID: 813 2116 9421 Passcode: 411564



Hiking Group

NEW SMALL GROUP - 4th Sundays from 1-3 PM beginning April 26. Sign up on Sunday mornings in the Courtyard.



Joyful Noise Choir

The Joyful Noise Choir, for children ages PreK-6 grade, meets after Worship on Sundays from 10:40 a.m. to 11:10 a.m. We first meet in the Fellowship Hall, have a quick snack, and then sing. Please join us in making a Joyful Noise. We welcome anyone who wants to have fun while learning to sing. There's even room for those who aren't quite sure!



Nourish at Noon

Join Pastor Jenn at noon on the fourth Monday of the month for a time of sharing and prayer. This women's spiritual formation group reads a variety of books, poems, and articles. It's not a Bible study: the readings are a starting point for conversation, personal reflection, and discerning God's movement in our lives.



Men's Breakfast Group

NEW SMALL GROUP - Start date TBD, Saturday mornings.



Prayers & Squares

Seeking new leaders, please let the office know if you are interested!



Seasoned Citizens

Seasoned Citizens meets once monthly at a local restaurant. We typically meet the on the second Tuesday at 11:30 a.m.

This group offers a welcome break from the daily routine with a chance for togetherness and visiting with other church members you may not typically see or talk to during regular church services.

We visit a variety of restaurants with an opportunity to experience different cuisines. So if you're retired or just free for lunch you qualify to join us to relax, connect, meet new friends, and enjoy each others company!

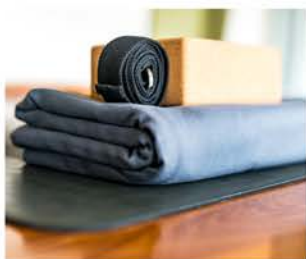
To join, please email Carrie Cochran at carriecochran@comcast.net or text at 925-989-4548.



Women at the Well

Friendship and Connection Great conversations about issues that matter, big & small.

Please join us Wednesday mornings, 9:30 to 11:30 a.m., in the Sanctuary. Contacts: Jan Villott & Susan Gillaspay.



Yoga

Come join us to refresh your mind, body and spirit. Class led by instructor Joy Ellebrecht on Mondays at 7 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Please bring your yoga mat and blocks. Class donations go toward UMCOR.

Contacts

Office

(925) 846-0221 / office@lynnewood.org

Care Team

Prayer Requests - If you would like the prayer chain to pray for you, send a request to Marsha Grimes: marshagrimes@att.net. Please indicate if you'd like this prayer to remain with the prayer chain or have it shared with the congregation in worship.

Visits - Linda Van Pelt: Ivanpelt3513@att.net
Raeanne Passantino: auntirae2@yahoo.com
Mary Ellen Huey: failedretirement@comcast.net

Pastoral Care and Support -

Pastor Jennifer Murdock: pastorjenn@lynnewood.org
Corey Dao-Forrester: corey@lynnewood.org

Stephen Ministers

Stephen Ministers come from all walks of life. Their commonality? A passion for bringing Christ's love and care to people during a time of need. You don't have to go through the difficult times alone. Our Stephen Ministers are ready to provide you with confidential, one-to-one Christian care and support to help you through a tough time. Our Stephen Ministers are there to care. To find out more about Stephen Ministry for yourself or someone you know, please call Linda Van Pelt at 510-376-0483 or email her at Ivanpelt3513@att.net.



*As a **reconciling congregation** that dares to question, love, and serve, we offer wide welcome to all people regardless of age, sex, racial or ethnic background, sexual orientation, gender identity, family status, physical or mental ability, or economic or immigration status.*
