The Cornerstone

Rolling Hills United Methodist Church
26438 Crenshaw Blvd.
Rolling Hills Estates, CA 90274
310-377-6771

August 2020

Breathing Safer in the Sanctuary

To help make our sanctuary safer for everyone as we look forward to returning to live, in person worship, we will be making improvements to our heating and air conditioning systems.

One of the improvements will be the introduction of additional fresh air into the room. Variable speed exhaust fans will be installed in the furnace rooms, located above Martha's Room on one side and the Comfort Room on the other. Those fans will vent air drawn from the sanctuary to the outdoors, while bringing in outside air through the Choir Room and Sacristy.

The other improvement is the installation of a bipolar ionization system, which will positively or negatively charge particles in the air as they move through the air handler. This will cause dust, dander or other allergens to stick together and fall out of the air because of their increased weight. This also applies to microscopic particles including those related to COVID-19, influenza, or even the common cold. Ionization makes particles easier to filter out of the air, and has been shown to reduce the presence of coronavirus in a room by more than 99% within 30 minutes of exposure.

The AtmosAir bipolar ionization system has been installed in hospitals and clinical settings around the country, as well as in the Staples Center and other arenas. We believe that it, along with additional fresh air, will help make our sanctuary safer and healthier for all – as close as possible to being outside.

The cost of the two systems will come to $20,600, installed. The Administrative Board approved the expenditure, which was brought forward by our Re-Gathering Team and recommended by our Board of Trustees. They will not only help us weather the current pandemic, but contribute to an atmosphere where it is easier to breathe for all. If you would like to share in the effort, your generous contribution will be welcome! The coronavirus was not in our budget, but we believe this will make it possible to gather sooner and safer.

from the pastors *Jonathan Chute*

I fixed my shaver last week. The beard trimmer broke one morning – not that I have a beard – and wouldn't close properly. It was uncomfortable to hold while shaving but I didn't want to spend the money for a new one. So I found that the part was available on line, and watched a couple of videos to see how to take the shaver apart. The part arrived a few days later and now it looks and works like it did when I bought it. Success!

I also replaced the gate on our side yard. It had already been fixed a couple of times, but not all that well. I decided a more lasting effort was required. So I took that section of the fence apart, attached more substantial posts to support the gate, rebuilt the gate itself and put something of a trellis over it. Thyra and I painted it up and she was happy with how it turned out. So that was good!

These are just a couple of the things I have accomplished over the past couple of months. I have also repaired several sprinklers in our garden, taken any number of boxes to the Salvation Army Donation Center, and finally removed the speakers from our back patio that provided a platform for many bird nests over the years. The speakers were there when we bought the house fifteen years ago. We never used them. I often thought "I should get rid of those." Finally, thanks to the coronavirus, I did!

What I mean by that is not that I finally had the time to do these projects. I am pretty well just as busy now as I ever was. But I got tired of looking at things I knew were wrong or broken – *and which I could actually do something about!* So I did them.

My ability to solve the pandemic is not like that. I believe in mask wearing, hand-washing, and keeping a safe distance from each other. But those are pretty well the only things I can do to help. And they don't seem like much. The big picture is out of my hands, and I don't like that.

I also really hate keeping a distance from this church family. It isn't who we are at our best. I love worshiping with you, gathering together with new and long-time friends to sing, to pray, to listen for God's leading and wisdom for our lives. I love caring for people *in person,* whether that is at the hospital or in your homes. So April and I are finding ways to visit in person. Sometimes that means getting together on the patio, or out in the Meditation Garden. Sometimes it means meeting somewhere else to walk, or at someone's home to sit and talk, while keeping each other safe. We want to do what we can to encourage and support your lives and your faith.

I know I can't fix everything, but I know that we are not powerless, either. "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7). As we find our way through this time of physical distance, let us not forget what we have going for us as gifts of God.

Grace and peace,

Jonathan

April Herron

Dear Friends,

I am thankful everyday for the gifts of phone, computer, and internet. Without them, I would not be able to catch daily glimpses of my grandson as he grows and changes; I would not be able to converse with my daughters and know how their daily life and work is going. WITH these technologies, I am able to stay connected to family and to the good people of RHUMC.

I know I am not alone in reaching for every possible opportunity to extend and receive care through texts, emails, phone and conference calls, and social media postings. When you were asked recently (via email) to complete a survey and comment on what, beyond online worship, has helped you to feel connected to the church, many of you mentioned email and telephone exchanges with one another and church staff members. You referenced participating in Bible studies, book discussions, Sister Circle gatherings, committee meetings, a weekly brunch with friends, and periodic check-ins with one of the church's musical groups, all by means of Zoom. You expressed appreciation for the Cornerstone, the recorded and live-streamed concerts, the weekend worship and Sunday School emails, and the prayer chain emails. Of course we would prefer to have the option of living our lives together in person, but these other means of connecting offer wonderful opportunities for encouragement and support in this time of considerable isolation.

I am equally thankful for the creativity of persons among us who are taking the time to send personal notes, deliver small gifts, and be helpful to friends and neighbors in the community. Some of you are coming by the church campus to individually carry out a repair, cleanup, or record-keeping project; to bring your financial contribution; to pray in the Meditation Garden; to donate supplies to the children's Sunday School; to collect a copy of the Upper Room Devotional Guide, or to pick up your bread and juice for communion. Sometimes I get to cross paths with you, either in passing or by appointment, and that is always a joy. When it comes to addressing spiritual or personal concerns, I've been glad to be able to meet by phone, or using Zoom, or by agreeing on an outdoor time and place for private conversation.

God has not left us without resources! Among God's blessings highlighted in your survey responses are the RHUMC memories we carry with us wherever we are, and the sense of sustenance that comes from remembering that God is always with us. I pray for your well-being and am trusting in God's Spirit to find ever new ways to keep us joined to one another in the service of Christ.

April

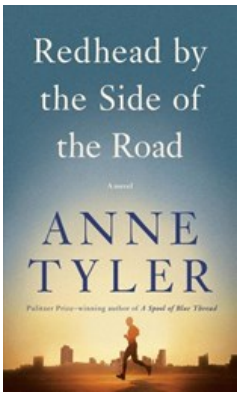
Message from Martha Rowlett
Senior Pastor Emeritus

My email has brought me some creative material during the pandemic time – some of it very funny, some worth just a smile, some I won't comment on. But a recent one was a voice of hope. I am passing the link on to you. It communicated hope to me.

The Longest Time, as sung by the Phoenix Chamber Choir

These singers believe that the difficult times we live in are not permanent. A brighter future is possible. This can pass. They believe that they have power to do something about the problem. They commit themselves to doing their part. They use the resources they have to make a difference. And in the process, they create something beautiful. They are not immediately solving the problem. But they are making life better for themselves and others by doing what they are doing. My day was brightened by watching and hearing them put their voices together in harmony to share with me their hope. They are right. This too will pass. We can hope that out of this time good things will come. Our part is to listen to what God is calling us to do and to respond using the gifts God has given us.

Summer Book Discussion



Anne Tyler's new novel, "The Redhead by the Side of the Road," is short, light, and humorous while also being true-to-life and insightful. The main character plugs away at his work in tech support and property management while trying to respond helpfully to family demands and relationship nuances. At times he seems to be as much a mystery to himself as he is to others. One review called it, "either wholly irrelevant or just what we need - or possibly both."

"...it's like the cherry Jell-O that Mom serves when you're feeling under the weather," observed reader and reviewer Ron Charles.

Tyler is the author of more than 20 books and won a Pulitzer in 1989. Discussion of "The Redhead by the Side of the Road" will take place via Zoom on **Monday, August 31**, at 7:00 p.m. April Herron will guide the conversation. To take part, please send an email to april@rhumc.org indicating your plans to participate.

Homeless Crisis - Learn and Give

Have you ever considered what it would be like to live on the streets without some sort of shelter over your head? Can you imagine trying to get to work or school without a sink to clean up? Homelessness is a chronic condition in Los Angeles County that is only getting worse due to Covid 19. How can you help?

Learn More: RHUMC will be hosting ***"Homelessness: Busting the Myths about the Crisis in our Community,"*** a seminar designed to bust some myths and describe the truth about homelessness in the South Bay. Join us via Zoom on Tuesday, August 11 at 7:00 p.m. for a moderated discussion featuring Nancy Wilcox, Co-Chair of the South Bay Coalition to End Homelessness, and Amber Sheikh Ginsberg, a local activist for the homeless community. If you would like to participate, please contact the church office at churchoffice@rhumc.org for the Zoom link.

Helping Newly Housed Homeless: There are various organizations helping to find temporary or long term housing for the homeless. But remember what it was like to move into your first place? You needed EVERY kind of household good. The Missions Committee is seeking to put together 10 "Welcome Home Kits" that Harbor Interfaith can use to assist the newly housed. You can donate whatever portion of the kits appeals to you and we will aggregate the donations. Here are the items we need for these kits:

Welcome Home Kits

Populating the Kitchen: Plates, bowls, mugs, and flatware for 4, toaster, cutting board, cooking utensils (e.g., pancake turner, spatula, wooden spoon), measuring cups and spoons, can opener, dish towels, potholders, trivet and placemats

Personalizing the Bedroom and Bath: Twin bed linen set (neutral or pastel color), two sets of bath and hand towels and washcloths, full sized hygiene items (soap, shampoo, conditioner, lotion), laundry basket

Cleaning Preparation: Mop, broom, dustpan, dish soap, all-purpose cleaner, sponges, scrubber, laundry detergent, paper towels, trash bags

Covering Basic Needs: The homeless always welcome new socks and underwear. We can use all sizes suitable for men and women. And the women need feminine hygiene products of all kinds. For sanitation reasons, please donate these items new in their original packaging.

Drive Through Giving Option: In conjunction with RHUMC's monthly communion pick up, the Missions Committee will be holding a drive through collection program to collect these items. You can drop donations then or, if it is easier for you, you can order items for delivery directly to Kathy Platnick or Kim Hall. Email us at kasandersplatnick@gmail.com or kimhallhomes@gmail.com if you want to pick that option.

– Re-Gathering –
A Plan for Live, In-Person Worship
Rolling Hills United Methodist Church
September 2020

As our congregation looks forward to worshiping together again in our sanctuary, our care for one another's physical and spiritual health is of primary concern. The church's Re-Gathering Team has been working over the past several weeks on guidelines for our worship during this pandemic time. This has included responding to mandates from public health authorities at the state and county level, as well as requirements set out by our bishop (who oversees roughly 400 United Methodist Churches in our area). Since the time of the initial appearance of the coronavirus, our understanding of the disease and its impact has developed and changed. Along with that, so have the recommendations for how best to keep ourselves and each other safe. The following represents our best thoughts on going forward as a family of faith.

Our Goal

Once the current restrictions have been lifted, we hope to offer three live, in-person worship services each week beginning the Sunday after Labor Day, September 13, 2020. This plan is offered to help reach that goal. The services will take place at our previous scheduled times of 8:30 and 10 a.m., and 5:30 p.m. For the foreseeable future there will be a maximum capacity at each service of 72, based on the limit of 25% of our sanctuary capacity of 288.

How Will We Limit the Attendance?

We will be using a reservation system developed by a United Methodist related firm called Pastor's Toolbox. It will allow persons to "save a seat" for themselves and their families at the service and on the Sunday of their choosing. You may also call the church office to make a reservation over the phone. In fact, we do not anticipate this being a significant problem. On the last Sunday of live worship in March our attendance was already well down as a result of people's health concerns. Many of our congregation feel safer participating in the recorded services on YouTube and have said that they will wait several months before returning to the sanctuary. We will encourage anyone who does not feel perfectly healthy, or who experiences symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, cough, body ache) to remain at home for their own and others' safety.

What About Visitors or Guests?

We hope that most new worshipers will find our website and registration process helpful. But we will keep a limited number of spaces available for those who did not register, or who may be joining family or friends at the last minute. We want to maintain our welcoming posture and practices.

Where Will We Park?

Parking will be in the lot as usual. No special provisions are being made for separating cars during arrival or departure.

Where Will We Sit?

Entry will be through the main front doors as usual. Ushers will welcome worshipers and seek to be helpful as needed. Touch free hand sanitizer stations will be available inside the sanctuary, along with touch free temperatures being taken by volunteers inside the entrance. Bulletins will be on a table for each person to pick up on their own. Recycling bins will be available at each exit. Seating will be in alternating rows, so that we will be six feet or more apart from those in front of or behind us. There will be six foot long dividers in each pew, to help worshipers maintain a safe distance from one another. Second service worshipers will sit in pews which were previously unoccupied during the first service. Exiting will be through the side doors, to minimize overlap between those departing and arriving.

What Will the Services Be Like?

Worshipers will be required to wear masks (provided for those who need one) and remain six feet apart from others outside of their household. The familiar order of service will be maintained, though with some differences. Hymns will be sung by our choir director or other solo voice. Any singer will be 15 feet or more away from worshipers seated in the sanctuary. A physical barrier will help reduce aerosol or droplet spread. Those present in the sanctuary may hum along with the hymns, but congregational and choral singing will not be allowed until it is safe. There will be no passing of the microphone for Joys and Concerns. Persons who wish to share a prayer request will be encouraged to do so by email or text, even during the service. We are also working to keep the services closer to 45 minutes in length, so that those departing from the 8:30 service will be leaving before our 10 a.m. worshipers arrive.

What About the Children?

Children will sit with their families at least through the time for The Word for Children. At that time those taking part in Sunday School may leave with their teachers, who will be leading them in a safe and healthy teaching environment (often outdoors). Other children may stay with their families through the rest of the service. At this time we do not see a way to provide nursery or child care, though we would seek to open both the Comfort Room and Martha's Room for families with infants or toddlers.

What About Heating and Air Conditioning?

We are taking the risk of aerosol and droplet spread seriously. We are adding a couple of important features to our sanctuary heating and cooling system. One is a process for ionizing microscopic particles as the air passes through it. This will cause dust, dander and even virus particles to stick together and drop out of the breathable air. We are also going to introduce more fresh air into the system to make it more like worshiping outdoors.

Will the Restrooms Be Open?

Yes. The main restrooms in the sanctuary can accommodate three persons at a time. Ushers will help us to know whether it is safe to enter. Of course washing hands has always been the best policy after restroom use, and we will expect everyone to follow that practice!

Why Not Worship Outside?

Many factors make that more difficult than it may first seem. We would need to install a sound system adequate to support the varying hearing needs of our congregation. The production of music on the patio is also more difficult than in our sanctuary. Setting up and taking down temporary seating would be necessary before and after each Sunday, as well as disinfecting each surface. Without protection from the sun or rain, depending on the season, it would be difficult to remain on the patio for very long.

What About Coffee Fellowship?

For the time being we will not be offering food or beverages on the patio. This is one of the requirements of our bishop for churches who wish to be open for worship. We look forward to a time when that will be safe once again.

What About Communion?

We plan to offer communion prepared for use by individuals or families outside of the sanctuary for now. We continue to explore other possibilities for safe and reverent participation in the Lord's Supper.

What About Baptism?

We are working to celebrate the baptism of infants, children or others in ways that are safe and appropriate. If families choose to do so, a parent or other family member may hold a young child in their arms, while one of the pastors administers the water and speaks the traditional words of the sacrament.

What About On Line Worship?

The current plan is that our video team will record the first service on Sunday morning at 8:30 a.m. They will edit the recording as necessary, adding the date and other titles and seeking to post it for viewing before noon each week. We know that many of our congregation now count on and look forward to participating in the service this way and want to be sure we continue to offer it.

How Long Will It Be Like This?

The honest answer is that we do not know. This has been a terribly challenging and difficult time for religious communities across our globe, and for millions of individuals and families directly affected by the coronavirus. Members of our church family have lost members of their families, as well as dear friends. Others have lost work, or seen their businesses disrupted or worse by its effects. We know that each member of our congregation is doing the best they know how under the circumstances. We hope that the emergence of an effective vaccine or other treatments will soon make it possible to return to something more like what we once took for granted. As we move through these days we are working to discover how we can best serve our community as the living Body of Christ.

Who Is the Re-Gathering Team?

Dale Gehr, Lay Leader
Janet Westergaard, Trustee Chair
Don McCurry, Trustee
Debra DeLuca, Children's Ministries
April Herron, Associate Pastor
Merrietta Fong, Chair, Ad Board
Chris Larson, Worship Chair
Carroll Whitney, Ad Board Member
Roksolana Vecerek, Exec Assistant
Jonathan Chute, Senior Pastor

SUMMER BLOOD DRIVE

GIVING THE GIFT OF LIFE

TORRANCE MEMORIAL BLOOD DONOR CENTER

During the pandemic our community faces a critical shortage of blood in our local hospitals. In recent years our congregation has worked with the Blood Donor Center at Torrance Memorial Medical Center for our annual Blood Drive. Their excellent team of registered nurses rigorously follow sanitizing protocols and wear protective masks as they work. It is a safe and effective way for us to support the health of our neighbors. We encourage you to do so if you possibly can.

INSTRUCTIONS

- To donate blood, please call the Blood Donor Center during weekday business hours at **310-517-4647.**
- A friendly registered nurse will assist you in answering questions and scheduling an appointment. Let her know that you are part of the RHUMC Blood Drive.
- After your appointment, even if you are unable to give blood, please call a member of the **Health & Wellness Team** listed below to receive a fun token of our appreciation!

DONORS

If your last name begins with letters A–K, call Chellie Powell at 310-541-9467.
If your last name begins with letters L–Z, call Gina Rembert at 310-413-1201.

Summer Finance Update

At the mid-point of a difficult and extraordinary year for many, both near to home and around our world, the generosity and hopefulness of our congregation remains vital and strong. We have not been able to gather in person for worship since March 15. Our connections have been maintained in ways we never imagined – Worship on YouTube, Bible Study by Zoom. We have also managed occasional in-person meetings to offer support and care. We are united in prayers for one another and for the community and world around us.

At the end of June, remarkably, contributions to our church's mission and ministry were within 5% of the budget we adopted at the beginning of the year, when no one could have anticipated what lay ahead. Not surprisingly, expenses are under budget, as many events we had planned were unable to be realized. As a result, the financial picture of our church is healthy. Your generosity and giving will make it possible for us to carry on the life and work entrusted to us. Thank you!

Our preschool and after school programs experienced significant losses in the spring of the year. Currently preschool Summer School and Kid Zone Summer Camp are operating at a reduced level, following protocols set by the LA County Health Department. We are hopeful that both will be able to carry out our mission with children and families in a sustainable and healthy way through the year to come. The losses incurred by these two important programs have effectively been covered by funds made available through the CARES/PPP loan program. We expect that the entire amount of $406,000 we received will be forgiven at the end of this year.

That is where we are as we look to the rest of the year ahead. We are grateful for the trust and hope that is expressed in your giving. Your gifts are making a difference, and will help us to be ready to move forward with energy and courage into the future to which God calls us. Thank you!

This month make a difference! by Patty Koester

The Toberman Neighborhood Center is focusing on replenishing their food pantry, daily deliveries are being made to families in the community as well as to those who still come to their doors.

Won't you help out? Donations will be accepted at the Toberman Neighborhood Center
Monday-Friday: 10:00-12:00 p.m. or 1:00-4:00 p.m., or
drop off @ the Koester's home located at 23300 Henry Ct., Torrance.

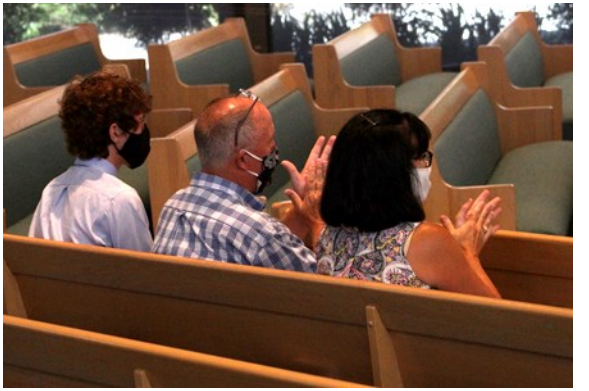
Thanking you once again for supporting Toberman Neighborhood Center, a Mission Project of the Methodist Church. For more information, contact Patty at 310-415-7301.

Welcome New Members

Tim and Kim are chemical engineers who have lived in various Oklahoma, Texas and California locations. They are Montanans by birth and both graduated from Montana State University in Bozeman. With their sons Liam and Landon they enjoy sports, camping, and music. Now that they have landed near the beautiful beaches of southern California, they are in the process of adding surfing to their repertoire.

The Seidels joined the same day that Liam was confirmed.

The Woodlands were able to represent the congregation in expressing joy.



Gratitude Goes to Our Club Maintenance Helpers

A special thanks to Dave Larson and Steve Boilard for securing eleven bulletin boards to the outdoor cubbies of each classroom. Also, a big thank you to Don McCurry for his genius idea of securing four umbrellas into four round tables for providing shade to the children and preventing the umbrellas from flying across the play yard.

Thank you all for taking care of the preschool needs!

Myra Ghabrial
Preschool Director

Celebration of Confirmation

Reed receives the blessing.

Ryan is presented with a Bible.

Liam prepared to respond to questions.

Everyone is happy.

Families celebrate.

Youth Ministries

Ignite Youth Ministry
Parent Meeting via Zoom
Wednesday, August 12 at 7:00 p.m.
Contact Kristin@rhumc.org for the link to join**.**

Youth Council Meeting
Monday, August 10 @ 7:00 p.m.
All youth are invited to attend this meeting via Zoom to help plan the calendar for the fall semester.
Contact Kristin@rhumc.org for the link to join**.**

Youth Sunday School
Sundays at 10:00 a.m. via Zoom
Contact Kristin@rhumc.org for the link to join**.**

Stay connected on social media:
Facebook page: facebook.com/groups/RHyouth
Instagram: rhumcyouth_

Rolling Hills United Methodist Preschool

Our preschool has been open for the past four weeks now. The children are so happy to be back! Staff, children and parents are keeping with the guidelines. We are looking forward to two more weeks of summer school fun!

The RHUMC Children's Ministry will be conducting online Sunday School for children in the congregation. Parents of TK-2nd graders will receive an email each Saturday with a Bible lesson, activity sheets and video links. For more information please email Debra DeLuca at debra@rhumc.org.

Parents of 3rd-5th graders will receive an email each Saturday with a Bible lesson, activity sheets and video links. For more information please email Ms. Stevie at steviesterling@gmail.com.

Our Youth Ministry will be conducting live stream Sunday School lessons for youth (6th-12th grades) via Google Meetups. Weekly lesson plans will be emailed. For more information please contact Kristin Reksc at Kristin@rhumc.org

Our Sunday School teachers are missing you and your children and would love to come and share an Otter Pop together! Following all safety precautions (mask, gloves and distancing) we could sit or stand and engage in joyful conversation.

If you would like to schedule a visit, please contact Debra DeLuca at debra@rhumc.org or (310) 507-4496.

Rolling Hills United Methodist Church
26438 Crenshaw Blvd.
Rolling Hills Estates, CA 90274

Change Service Requested

SAVE OUR PLANET!

Have your Cornerstone sent via email; it's easy, just call the church office at 310-377-6771. You can also view the Cornerstone on the church website at www.rhumc.org

Senior Pastor	Jonathan Chute	Associate Pastor	April Herron
Senior Pastor Emeritus	Martha Rowlett	Music Director	Chuck Dickerson
Preschool Director	Myra Ghabrial	Organist/Pianist	Althea Waites
Parish Nurse	Annette Matsuda	3rd Service Music	Paula Kuno
Children's Ministry Dir.	Debra DeLuca	Exec. Asst. to Pastor	Roksolana Vecerek
Youth Ministry Director	Kristin Reksc	Church Office Admin.	Peggy Roulette
Kid Zone Director	Megan Pelc	Custodian	Miguel Portillo
Treasurer	John Fitzgerald		
Church Business Mgr.	Nicole Lowery Zakman		

Church Office Phone	310-377-6771	Resident Bishop	Grant J. Hagiya
Fax Line	310-544-4123	District Superintendent	Mark Nakagawa
Web Site	www.rhumc.org		

SUNDAY WORSHIP HOURS
8:30 & 10 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.
CHURCH OFFICE HOURS
Monday – Friday 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Next Cornerstone deadline is August 21
www.rhumc.org