



A Community of Faith With a Place for You!
A place to belong... A place to believe... A place to become!

STEEPLE NOTES

FEBRUARY 2021



Holy Communion To Be Served in St. John's Sanctuary This Sunday

With more than 10 months of COVID precautions and safety protocols in place for our community and nation, Pastor Wade Lindstrom announced two weeks ago that the Sanctuary will be used for Holy Communion Sunday on the first Sunday of each month. Please come to worship if you are able at 10 a.m. this Sunday, February 7. A special program is planned (see Pastor Wade's pastoral message on Page 2.) Also, volunteers will be recruited to deliver a Valentine's Day gift bag to homebound members. (See story on Page 3.)

Wearing masks and practicing social distancing are required in the Sanctuary. The nursery remains closed at this time.

All other worship services during February will be held in the Community Life Building, which has been the worship location since early October.

Looking Ahead to 2021 Lent Calendar

Lent, the fourth season of the Christian Church calendar, is a time of preparation, penitence, and reflection. The season lasts 40 days from Ash Wednesday until Easter Eve, not including Sundays.

The liturgical color for Lent is purple to represent the royalty of Christ as King. The symbol of Lent is the cross as it commemorates Christ's suffering and death. Here are important dates during the 2021 Lenten season:

- Feb. 17, Ash Wednesday
- Feb. 21, First Sunday in Lent
- Feb. 28, Second Sunday in Lent
- March 7, Third Sunday in Lent
- March 14, Fourth Sunday in Lent
(also start of Daylight Saving Time)
- March 21, Fifth Sunday in Lent
- March 28, Palm Sunday
- April 1, Maundy Thursday
- April 2, Good Friday
- April 4, Easter Sunday
(See pastoral message on Page 2 for additional details)

St. John's Foundation Sets Meeting

By Sue Hoyt, Retiring Foundation President

The first meeting of 2021 of the St. John's Foundation will be held Wednesday, February 10, at 5:30 p.m., at which time several wealth advisors (Mr. Mike Brell, Ms. Cindy Barrera, Ms. Dora Peña, and Mr. Daniel Nash) from Frost Bank will present the Annual Report of the Investment Accounts of the Foundation (the legacy account, the two \$15,000 certificates of deposit, and the Money Market Account).

Directors will at this meeting review the Investment Accounts, review the Investment Policy, vote to distribute a specific amount of the 2020 earnings, and set the deadline for *Request for Funds* to be submitted.

New Foundation members will be introduced: Julie Fomenko, Christie Garza Roberts, and Carolyn Scrivano Martin. Continuing Directors are Darron Bergstrom, Connie Hahn, Sherrie Johnson, Janet Berridge, Jean Shivers, and Will Straub. Church Council (Bryan Thompson), Trustees (Bruce Hamende), and Finance (Darron Bergstrom) Chairs serve as ex-officio members with full member privileges. Officers will be elected, and other business will be handled.

Directors will be reminded of the addition to the Foundation Investment Account in 2020 of \$23,723.22 in May representing the proceeds of the life insurance policy of Jo Anne Wilshusen that she bequeathed to the Foundation years ago.

Groups in the church are encouraged to complete *Request for Funds* forms once they are available in the near future. Church members are encouraged to include St. John's Foundation in their wills and/or to give legacy gifts now. Please see the Foundation brochure around the church and/or contact one of the directors for more information.

PASTOR'S MESSAGE



Season of Lent Begins February 17

February is here, Spring is on the way, and it's beginning to feel like there is more hope about some relief from the COVID-19 pandemic. Two of our adult Sunday School classes have begun considering meeting or are meeting already. We remain hopeful.

This Sunday, February 7, we will meet for worship in the Sanctuary for communion and a very special sermon event. We will be joined by Julie Thigpen and Robin Blue to complete our Sermon series, "What Keeps You Up at Night?"

Julie and Robin both work with children and families in different therapeutic settings related to cognitive and emotional health. We will have a panel discussion to examine solutions for "up at night" issues related to families and COVID, as well as other challenges.

Communion

February 7 will also be our first Communion Sunday meeting in the Sanctuary since last March. I hope you'll join us if you can.

As always there will also be an online service as well.

The season of LENT is upon us. Lent begins on February 17 (Ash Wednesday) and ends with Easter Day on Sunday, April 4.

As we complete the days of Lent, we prepare for the wonderful news of Easter. The purpose of Lent is to be a season of fasting, self-denial, Christian growth, repentance, conversion, and simplicity.

Lent, which comes from the Teutonic (German) word for springtime, can be viewed as a spiritual spring cleaning: a time for taking spiritual inventory and then cleaning out those

things which hinder our corporate and personal relationships with Jesus Christ and our service to Him.

Thus, it is fitting that the season of Lent begin with a symbol of repentance: placing ashes on one's head or forehead. However, we must remember that the disciplines of Lent are supposed to ultimately transform our entire person: body, soul, and spirit. These disciplines are meant to help us become more like Christ.

In short, Lent is the period of making changes or adjustments in our lives to be in line with God's desire for holiness.

Ash Wednesday

We will begin the Lenten Season with a traditional Ash Wednesday Service in the Sanctuary on Ash Wednesday, February 17, at 5:30 p.m. The service will include imposition of Ashes and commitments to observe a Holy Lent.

Lenten Reflections

You are also invited to join us in a series of Lenten reflections beginning Thursday, February 18. Each Thursday, Harley Mathews, our pastoral intern, and I will drop a video reflection on a Lenten topic. The video will be posted to our Facebook Page, our church website, and our YouTube page.

Sermons during the Lenten Season will be themed around these topics.

We continue to worship together both in-person at 10:00 a.m. and online at 11:00 a.m. each Sunday.

We continue to pray for vaccines to be effective and help us to a time where we can be fully engaged in our community. Until then we prepare and anticipate.

Peace, Pastor Wade

2021 Rio Texas Annual Conference 'Virtual'

A Message from Bishop Schnase, Rio Texas Conference

Our 2020-2021 Annual Conference year is in full swing, and ministry continues to impact lives and communities in the name and power of Jesus.

As the Rio Texas Conference continues to be impacted by the COVID-19 virus, and the number of persons infected by the virus continues to grow, leaders from throughout the Conference have discussed the effect that this may have on conducting the 2021 Annual Conference in June.

After discussions with the Uniting Table, the Cabinet, and other district and conference leaders, it has been decided that we will hold a virtual 2021 Annual Conference. Planning is already underway. Our session will incorporate learnings and feedback from our virtual Annual Conference in October 2020, including a new voting system, improved processes for delegates to be recognized from the (virtual) floor, and opportunities for delegates to connect with one another.

Information on these tools will be posted on the website and emailed to delegates as planning develops, so preparations can be made for our virtual time together.

Please pray for the Rio Texas Conference as we continue our ministry in new and exciting ways.

Trustees Provide Details for New Electronic Sign on Alameda Street

By Robyn Cobb, Trustees' Secretary

SJUMC Alameda Street Sign: Trustees approved moving forward with a local company, Corpus Christi Stamp Works, to refurbish the existing foundation and parts of the external structure of the sign that is currently in place. The contract with CC Stamp Works will also involve purchase of a new digital board that will allow St. John's to change messages at will from computers and/or mobile devices.

The topmost portion of the sign will be internally lit and will have a static display of the church's name. Directly below that will be the digital board displaying messages that can be changed by staff or other approved individuals. Internal lighting in the bottom portion of the sign will also show images (graphics) on panels that can be changed out.

The anticipated timeframe for the electronics board to arrive is approximately 8 weeks and the sign maker can complete work on other parts of the sign while awaiting the electronics board. Any financial contributions to this project would greatly assist Trustees as they juggle their budget to tackle other church needs.

Because the electrical circuit that goes out to the area fronting Alameda Street needs to be reworked for the sign, and lights in the front parking lot need to be replaced, Trustees approved additional funding to cover the costs of the electrical work as well as a change to LED lights in the existing parking lot lamp posts. Trustees worked with Mike Freitag, Profire Protection, Inc., to make repairs to the fire vault for the Community Life Building.

The Board of Trustees would like to encourage St. John's members to notify staff or trustees' members regarding any observed facility repair needs or other items on the church campus that need to be addressed.



St. John's signage, located at the front of the church property at 5300 S. Alameda, has been out of commission since it was damaged by a fire about 2 years ago.

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Ann Smith
- 3 Randy Haaker
- 6 Connie Hahn, Joyce Hamende, Mike Zammiello
- 8 Sharon Staiger
- 9 Holly Thompson
- 10 Chris Garcia
- 11 Bill Swope
- 13 Solenne Daugherty
- 14 Karen Carden, Christopher Veit
- 15 Roma Onwiler, Miles Pace
- 18 Richard Fischer, Jeanne Luker
- 19 Palmer Blue
- 21 JoAnn Holland
- 22 Hollie Boehmer, Xavier Steehler
- 25 Darron Bergstrom
- 26 Rhonda Sky-Eagle
- 27 Brendan Beard
- 28 Darlene Duncan, Michael Jinnette

NOTE: If your name was omitted on the birthday list, or if you see other errors, please call Cathy McRorey at the church, 991-4342.

Valentine's Day Gift Bags Readied for 35 Homebound Members



Mable Pippin (l) and Judi Edwards pose with gift bags.

The Shepherding Care team, chaired by Judi Edwards, has prepared 35 Valentine's Day gift bags for delivery this coming week to St. John's homebound members. The bags (each with name and address) will be placed on the chancel rail in the Sanctuary this Sunday, February 7. If you can deliver one or two bags, please help with this project!

Black History Is Methodist History

Month of February Focuses on Black Pioneers

By Harley Mathews, Pastoral Intern

February is a short month. I never seem to remember that before it arrives.

It is a month that socially reminds us to love each other with chocolates and flowers. It asks us to prepare our bodies, minds, and hearts in the spiritual discipline of Lent. We remember our being dust and contemplate our dying on Ash Wednesday. And the whole month of February includes remembering black pioneers in both the secular and religious world.

The United Methodist Church has history of black clergy and lay leaders who surely deserve some attention and remembrance. I want to share two stories with you here in Steeple Notes along those lines.

Charles Albert Tindley, a United Methodist Pastor, wrote “All Shall Overcome Someday.” The song literally became an anthem that brought together all races, creeds, and political leanings into union in the early 1960s.

We know as Christians that communal singing will often “preach” more than a series of sermons. The use of our own voices, quality or not, joined with others in statements of truth and adoration do something to us.

I am a music fan. I know weirdly obscure information about early punk and hardcore bands, am very versed in the specific movements of Christian alternative music, and am rarely in my office without music playing. While writing this, I am listening to a compilation on Spotify of vinyl records that James Baldwin had collected that someone curated for a playlist that is over 39,000 songs.¹



The 2021 theme for Black History Month is “The Black Family: Representation, Identity, and Diversity.”

It does something to us, doesn't it? Listening and being a part of an experience. Worship, in the streets of Birmingham in the 1960s, included prayer, protest, and communal singing that “We Shall Overcome.” As Methodists, and a humans, we can sing that now reminding ourselves of its past, present, and future importance.

I learned recently that the earliest black female Pastor in the United Methodist Church in America was in 1808 and she retired after 50 years of preaching to live in a Quaker community. Her name was Elizabeth.

“African-American women comprise more than 70 percent of the active membership of generally any African-American congregation one might attend today,” reports um-insight.²

Can you imagine what those sermons contributed to relationships between enslaved and freed peoples? What hymns were sung there? What texts were used to teach about Christ and holiness in those turbulent years?

I am grateful that we are in a point in scholarship and society where we have religious historians and laypersons who are encouraged to find these sermons, themes, and contributions

partly due to a national call to the importance of Black history.

Many historians have pointed out that the church is becoming increasingly feminine and brown. It is known as the browning of Christianity, especially in developed nations.

As a white interim pastor looking at candidacy and a Masters of Divinity degree in the fall of this year, I look forward to that transition and the results of having a greatly diverse leadership as a Methodist.

I hope this has blessed your February and that you can eat chocolate, kiss your beloved, seek out clarity through the spiritual discipline of Lent, and all the while celebrate the influence of black voices in your own context.

Grace and Peace to each of you, all the way, Harley Mathews.

(Footnotes)

¹ The spotify playlist is called Chez Baldwin, and can be accessed through the app. It truly is wonderful.

² <https://um-insight.net/in-the-church/ordained-ministry/hidden-figures-how-black-women-preachers/>

Two Adult Sunday School Classes Are Resuming Classes



SEEKERS: Nine Seekers Class members gathered in the patio area this past Sunday --for the first time in 10 months--and were happy to see one another, Robyn Cobb said. The group will continue to gather from 9:15-10 a.m. on Sunday in the patio area, or if inclement weather, in the Fellowship Hall.. Pictured are Gerri and Benny Cason, Julie Fomenko, Janice Cagle, Robyn Cobb, Joyce and Bruce Hamende, Lynn Bridges, and Phil Sims (pictured in the back). The Seekers Class welcomes others to join them on Sunday mornings.

CCI CLASS: The CCI Class has decided to also resume its Sunday School class and will meet this Sunday, February 7, from 9:15-10 a.m. in the Community Life Building. Future meetings will be in the Sanctuary unless a Sunday worship service is scheduled in that space. Face mask mandates and social distancing protocols will remain in place, said teacher Chris Garcia. The Friendship Class, taught by Nancy Busby, has been invited to join the CCI Class. If you have been thinking about making Sunday School part of your Sunday routine, you are cordially invited to join us.

AROUND THE CHURCH



(Above) Diana Shaffer helps Robyn Cobb rehang seasonal wall banners in a storage closet near the Sanctuary. St. John's is so fortunate to have more than 15 wall banners created over the past 40 years by talented women in the church. If you have a design idea or an interest in creating a new banner, please contact Worship Chair Leslie Albrecht.



Pastor Wade Lindstrom and Pastoral Intern Harley Mathews are pictured during a 10 a.m. worship service in the Community Life Building. An average attendance on Sundays is about 40, but the number is expected to increase slightly as more of St. John's community of faith receives the COVID vaccine.



Posing after "undecorating" the Sanctuary and storing Advent and Christmas decorations are (left photo) Diana Shaffer, Robyn Cobb, JoAnn Holland, Louise Wagner, Betty Thompson, and (seated) Suzy Shepard; (above photo) Carolyn Pence, Joyce Zimmerman, and Evalynn Bunk. Thanks also to Brian Claunch and Tonya Delk for helping hang, take down, and store the Christmas wreaths hung in the windows for the Christmas Eve service.



United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) Responding to Worldwide Needs During Pandemic

Seeking to help the global community as the world responds to the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 8,350 people recently donated \$1.7 million to the Sheltering in Love campaign coordinated by the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR).

Thanks to donations to the Sheltering in Love campaign and other funding from Global Ministries, a total of \$2,329,785 through 230 grants to 43 countries and 43 U.S. states and territories has been awarded in support of 105 local churches, 54 episcopal areas, and 52 nonprofit organizations.

UMCOR established the fund to provide rapid response grants to help churches and partners assist vulnerable populations dealing with pressing needs related to the pandemic, such as food security, healthcare, job stability and water, sanitation and hygiene.

Examples of Sheltering in Love grants include:

- in Alaska, stranded fishing industry employees in Unalaska, 800 miles from the nearest hospital in Anchorage, were given access to a Saturday/Sunday day shelter by Unalaska United Methodist Church, which offered showers, laundry facilities, meals, utilities and limited assistance with travel and planning.
- in Alabama, seasonal workers and resort industry personnel who lost their jobs or businesses received funds through Gulf Shores United Methodist Church to pay for utilities, childcare and other basic needs.
- in California, the Gum Moon Residence Hall of San Francisco provided groceries and rent to low-income Asian women who lost their jobs or had their income reduced because of the pandemic.
- in Texas, the Good Neighbor Settlement House of Brownsville, the sole food pantry open in the area during the height of the pandemic, was



able to provide for the unhoused population, unemployed families, furloughed restaurant workers and people who have suffered layoffs. The grant covered purchasing food, disposable carry-out and cleaning supplies needed to continue their program.

- in Nepal, 500 households in the Jukepani Rural Municipality of Nawalparasi District affected by the lockdown received groceries when a grant to Sanyukta Methodist Mandali Ko Biswabhyapi Sewakai helped the residents of this marginalized area receive food that would give their immunity systems a needed boost.
- in Puerto Rico, where 45% of the population lives under the poverty level, a grant helped the Methodist Church of Puerto Rico provide food to families and personal protective equipment gear to first responders (volunteers) of local churches distributing food and supplies.
- in Eurasia, families who had lost all sources of income because of the

pandemic were helped by The United Methodist Church in Eurasia (Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan).

“The COVID-19 pandemic has caused people to shelter in isolation, but we are all united in our desire to demonstrate God’s love for one another by supporting programs that help those impacted by the novel coronavirus,” said Thomas G. Kemper, general secretary of Global Ministries and a leader of the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR).

“We appreciate the tremendous outpouring of support for this program and the ability to quickly distribute these funds to partners serving their local communities,” he added.

Grants were rapidly released through the Sheltering in Love fund, enabling partners to assist vulnerable populations around the world impacted by COVID-19, including racial/ethnic and indigenous communities in the United States.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has caused people to shelter in isolation, but we are all united in our desire to demonstrate God’s love for one another by supporting programs that help those impacted by the novel coronavirus.”

YOUTH CELEBRATE NEW YEAR WITH SMALL GATHERING

By Leslie Albrecht, Director of Youth Ministries

We had a nice evening in the Community Life Building, celebrating the new year and Malia's birthday. This year we didn't stay all night, and of course we had precautions in place. It was great to be together again even if it was in a limited way. Special thanks to several church members and parents who helped with refreshments.

I'd like to invite the Youth to stay after the services starting this Sunday, February 7, and continuing through the month of February. Since we will have already been together in the worship service staying in the same facility, socially distanced for a bit longer for discussion. With one service we will have all heard the sermon and can use that as a basis for our conversation along with the usual catching up with each other.

LOOKING AHEAD: Be on the look out for information about a day-long retreat coming soon with Pastoral Intern Harley Mathews serving as spiritual leader.



St. John's UMC Prayer List



Please pray for those who are on the Prayer List. After 30 days, names on the prayer list will be removed. Please submit another prayer card or call the church office at 991-4342 if you would like to add someone or return someone to the prayer list. [Emergency messages to Pastor Wade---960-4021]

Grieving: The Family of Hank Straub (father of Will Straub); Family of Jeanne Mayes (widow of Bob Mayes);

Family of Jay Mathews (father of Harley and Adam Mathews)

Recovering at Home: Tom Niskala, Roseann Zammiello, Cathi Garza

Our Church
Coronavirus Victims
and Families
President Joe Biden &
our national leaders
US Military
World Leadership
Teachers, Parents
and Students
Children's Learning
Center
CC Metro Ministries
The Wenholz House
Katherine Anderson
Bruce Armstrong
Adela Balderas
Phillip Balderas
Cassie Barber
Robin Blue
Melissa Brownlee

Tyler Brownlee
Evalynn Bunk
Jeff Caravantes
Marcia Caravantes
Tammy Cardwell
(Kerrville--
granddaughter of
Suzy Shepard)
Margo Chapman
Margo C.
Josh W. Cox
Dana D'Amore
Mike Dailey
Jan Decovic
Judy Forbes
Robert Garza
Glover and Francis
Families
Joe H.
Fay Haggerty

Kathryn Heslep
JoAnn Holland
Elle Silvas Holloway
Hopkins Family
Deborah Jacobs
Jinnette Family
Elene Johnson
Hydie Johnson
Jack Johnson
Stacia Johnston
Phyllis Jones
Ann Jordan
Margaret K.
Mimi Keen
Charlotte Kunc
Tommy Lewis
Mathews Family
Tom Moore
Lee Narvarro
Judi Oestreich

Todd Olson
David Olson
Roma Onwiler
Chris Oxley
Mike P.
Dolores Pace
Jack Pace
Roger Pigott
Jenna Purdy
Dottie Ramella
Amy Ramsdell
Sue Rees
Mary Lee Ress
Rilla Roots
Kelly R.
Kelly S.
Fay Sassman
Ivan Shaver
Lyneve Shaver
Suzy Shepard

Susan Skidmore
Teresa Smith
Cindy Straub
Richard & Angela
Strong
Terrie & Marie
Charles Teas
Earlene Thorne
Sara Tucker
Dorothy Tullos
Family of Jamie Ward
Kimbo Ward
Davris White
Betty Wilson
Beverly Wilson
Doug & Sharon
Winnek
Mary Lee Woodson



Thy Kingdom Come – Outreach Meeting

By Harley Mathews, Pastoral Intern



Greetings, St. John’s family. I am glad to be able to write to you about the work already happening through the only heavy worship service in the South Texas area, *Thy Kingdom Come!*

As you have read in January, we are looking for ways to add substance to our service and to serve our community. That part is just what I want to encourage you about this month.

The worship team for TKC met on January 24, 2021, at 6:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall and came up with a list of opportunities to partner with ministries as well as do some of our own hands-on serving.

Many of the college community and our brothers and sisters experiencing poverty use the #5 bus that travels the whole route of Alameda. As you know, the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) maintains the bus routes throughout our city.

Riding the \$6 leads them to not only Coffee Waves (just up the street from us, I would suggest the iced cold brew!) and our church, but apartments, H-E-B, and all the way downtown.

The advantage to students is that the bus is free transportation with a student ID, which means students working on degrees at both Del Mar College and Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi can ride between schools.

I did this while getting my Bachelor’s degree, and it was great seeing people on a regular basis as we approached morning classes with large coffees or were on our way home after a late night class. But that is context. Where’s the outreach, you ask?

Thy Kingdom Come ordered 100 1.7oz hand sanitizers. We are working on a QR code that will link the church, TKC’s times, and our social media platforms to put as a sticker on the bottles, as well as a cardstock flyer inviting them to church.



You are invited to attend all parts of *Thy Kingdom Come....* especially consider the Second Sunday of the month service of *THY KINGDOM COME* at 7 p.m., Fellowship Hall, St. John’s UMC.

We will have a team of people with gloves and masks board the bus one Saturday (to be determined) in February and pass out the sanitizer all the way to downtown and return on the bus to the church where we have parked.

I am looking forward to conversation and opportunities for prayer with these students and folks that utilize our wonderful RTA system.

Would you pray with us this month? Pray with us to continue to get busier on our church campus in worship and community action. Pray that we would have courage and confidence. Pray that we would have safety and assurance that we have a whole church holding us close as we tell people about the unique experiences that St. John’s has to offer.

I would like to encourage you with scripture, as we have been going through the gospel of Mark on a weekly basis, it seems fitting to use that text.

Jesus’ words to Levi are simple enough, “Follow me” in Mark 2:13, and yet we can come up with thousands of ways to do just that.

It is not TKC’s goal to “reinvent the wheel” but to love our neighbors (which means learning who they are) and ask where Jesus may go that we have not. The RTA seems to be a community that we are willing to start with!

All the grace and peace to each of you, Amen.

(See February schedule reminder on Page 10)

St. John's United Methodist Men



The United Methodist Men have resumed their weekly meeting every Wednesday morning at 7 a.m., in Fellowship Hall. Bring your own breakfast fare and coffee, and be sure to wear your mask!

New officers for 2021 were elected in January at the UMM breakfast meeting in Fellowship Hall.

CONGRATULATIONS TO:

Robert Garza, President
Jim Falwell, Vice President
Gary Schwartz, Secretary
Darron Bergstrom, Treasurer

Special thanks to Robert for accepting the top leadership role...and sincere thanks to Jim Falwell for serving as UMM president during 2020. Both Gary and Darron served last year and will retain their respective tasks as secretary and treasurer.

Thanks to Cathi Garza for creating this photo poster!



NEWS FROM AND ABOUT OUR CHURCH COMMUNITY

Request for Prayers from the Purdy Family

(Rev. Steve Purdy served as senior pastor of St. John's from 1996-2002 ; his wife Vickie and daughters Alicia and Jenna all were active in church activities during his ministry, Jenna went on to seminary and was serving as a church pastor when she became ill.

Vickie writes: "I'm writing to enlist additional prayers for our daughter, Jenna Purdy, who has Stage IV Hodgkin Lymphoma. She had 12 rounds of chemotherapy, but the cancer remains and is growing. She starts immunotherapy with Keytruda tomorrow (Jan. 29). Currently, she is experiencing some pain in her back and is nauseated almost constantly. She eats mashed potatoes and crackers, but little else. And she is extremely tired. Please lift her up...and we wouldn't mind prayers for us, either. It is a difficult season, but we sense God showing up in countless ways."

Death of Jeanne C. Mayes

Jeanne C. Mayes, widow of church member Bob Mayes, who died last spring, died in late December at a nursing facility in San Antonio. She and Bob had lived in Corpus Christi for many years. Bob's son Darryl, who grew up in the church, sent words of thanks for St. John's love and support during this past year.

50th Wedding Anniversary

Best wishes to Bryan and Betty Thompson, members of St. John's for many years, who celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on December 26 with family.



United Methodist Women Planning “Call to Prayer & Self Denial” Service

An annual program of United Methodist Women units around the world highlights UMW programs and encourages women to continue to give their financial gifts thoughtfully in order to make a difference in the lives of women, children, and youth around the world.

The program is called “A Call to Prayer and Self-Denial,” and this year’s theme is “She Leads: Empowering Women to Make a Difference.” The scripture for the 2021 observance is Numbers 27:1-8.

Planning is under way for the St. John’s UMW to plan and host the one-hour virtual meeting (perhaps with an in-person component), with President Carole Salsberry, Vice President Chris Garcia, and Treasurer Glenda Sanders coordinating the program. Two other UMW units at Kelsey Memorial UMC and St. Peter’s by the Sea UMC will be invited to participate, but the program is open to all women (and men) in the church.

The program date and time will be announced soon.

United Methodist Women has a history of more than 150 years of bold mission work to address the care for vulnerable women, children, and youth. Programs promote leadership development and the well-being of underserved women, children, and families. A recent example is the Training for Transformation project to pilot a women’s leadership development program in three African countries.

A special offering will be taken during the “Call to Prayer” program. If you have questions and/or want to participate, please text Chris Garcia at 244-4193.

RUTH CIRCLE Announces Lenten Lessons; All Church Members Invited To Participate

Starting Tuesday, February 16, Ruth Circle will start a new online lesson series for Lent. Elaine Clanton Harpine, chair, said the circle will meet online every Tuesday from February 16 to March 31 from 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

The topic will be *The Last Week*. We will be examining the historical perspective as presented in the book *The Last Week* and the book *The Mind of Jesus*. We hope you will join us. You do not need to be a member of Ruth Circle to participate. Everyone is welcome—all ages, both women and men.

Contact Elaine Clanton Harpine for further details on how to join the meeting. We will be using Teams—very easy, a one-click process. Contact Elaine at 361-867-8040 or clantonharpine@hotmail.com

MEMORIAL GIFTS

Financial gifts given in memory, in celebration of, or in honor of family members, friends, and ministries are placed in St. John’s UMC Memorial Fund. Current funds include Building, Choir, Youth, Scholarship, Worship, Care/Concern/Bereavement, Food Pantry, and Undesignated for general church needs. Your gift, in any amount, is sincerely appreciated.

In loving memory of Jay Mathews, father of Harley and Adam Mathews, gifts to the Worship Fund from Barb Benton and Chris Garcia.

In honor of the late John and Jo Anne Wilshusen, an undesignated gift from Nancy Hedrick of Richmond, Tx.

In loving memory of Margaret Earle, mother of Leslie Albrecht, a gift to the Care/Concern/Bereavement Fund from the CCI Sunday School class.



Thy Kingdom Come Schedule for February 2021

7 – online devotion on “Seeds and Mark Chapter 4” on Facebook and Instagram (worship and a short devotional)

14 – Live service in the Fellowship Hall, original music, sermon on Mark 5, and communion will be served. We look forward to seeing you, and if you have missed “live music” in our area this is a great opportunity to get your hardcore fix and fellowship safely.

21 – “Circle Pit” small group on Zoom at 6:30 – 7:30pm. Let’s share how our week is going and pray for one another and dig a little bit into Mark chapter 6. Contact Harley (361-834-9197 or Harley.sjmethodist@gmail.com for link) We look forward to trying out an in-person small group soon, but for now we will meet on Zoom.

28 – Outreach week, we will be taking a team of volunteers on RTA#5 to hand out hand sanitizer and pray with people along the way. This bus is a regular opportunity to meet people in our neighborhood and share what St. John’s as a church is doing. Contact us for more information or to volunteer.

Consider Disciplines of Letting Go and Disciplines of Activity To Strengthen Our Faithfulness and Discipleship During Lent

By Chris Garcia, Lay Leader

In the seasons of Lent and Easter, the church focuses on remembering, retelling and participating in the story of the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. During Lent, we enter into a season of preparation, self-reflection and repentance when we seek to literally “turn around” and realign our lives to focus toward God.

For many Christians and believers around the world, it is a time to give up something like meat or chocolate or other favorite foods; or perhaps give up gossip or rudeness or belittling people. But for our Methodist family of faith, it’s a time to take on new life-giving practices—practices that will rid us of distractions and our own selfish desires. By doing so, we seek to live and love as more faithful disciples of Jesus Christ.

Throughout the Bible, God teaches us about specific “keys”—spiritual disciplines—that we need to have and use in order to get where we need to go spiritually.

These spiritual disciplines are keys to God’s heart that open up an intimate relationship with our Creator. The keys come to us by choice and are a means to an end—intimacy with Jesus, as we live in the fruit of the Holy Spirit and fulfill God’s purpose for us.

The difficult task is that we must harness our internal discipline to use them. Webster’s Dictionary defines discipline as “training that develops self-control.”

Spiritual disciplines don’t always come easily; but once we choose to incorporate them into our lives on a regular and consistent basis, they become rewarding habits that produce positive results in our lives.

There are many spiritual disciplines, but consider these five identified by renowned theologian and author Richard Foster.

Disciplines of Letting Go

Solitude—Spending time alone to be with God. Find a quiet place to be alone with God for a period of time. Use the Bible as a source of companionship with God. Listen to Him. Remain alone and still.

Silence—Removing noisy distractions to hear from God. Find a quiet place away from noise to hear from God. Write your thoughts and impressions as God directs your heart. Silence can occur even in the midst of noise and distraction. This could mean talking less or turning off the radio and the TV.

Fasting—Skipping meal(s) to find greater nourishment from God. Choose a period of time to go without food. Drink water and, if necessary, take vitamin supplements. Feel the pain of having an empty stomach and depend on God to fill you with His grace.

Simplicity or Frugality—Learning to live with less money and still meet your basic needs. Before buying something new, choose to go without or pick a less expensive alternative that will serve your basic needs. Consider letting go of some of your “stuff” or baggage. Live a simple, focused life.

Sacrifice—Giving of our resources beyond what seems reasonable to remind us of our dependence on Christ. Choose to give your time or finances to the Lord beyond what you normally would.

Disciplines of Activity

The disciplines of “letting go,” however, must be counter-balanced and supplemented by disciplines of engagement (activity). These “Disciplines of Activity” nurture our souls and strengthen us for the race ahead. Consider these:

Study—Spending time reading the Scriptures and meditating on its meaning and importance to our lives. We are nourished by the Word because it is our source of spiritual strength. Choose a time and a place to feed from the Word of God regularly.

Worship—Offering praise and adoration to God. His praise should continually be on our lips and in our thoughts. Read psalms, hymns, or spiritual songs, and sing to the Lord daily.

Prayer and Meditation (also Journaling)—Talking to and listening to God about our relationship with Him and about the concerns of others. Find time to pray to God without the distraction of people or things. Combine your prayer time with meditation on the Scriptures in order to focus on Christ.

Fellowship—Mutual caring and ministry in the body of Christ. Meet regularly with other Christians to find ways to minister to others. Encourage one another. Combine fellowship with Service that involves serving others.

As we employ these tools personally...with deliberation and faithfulness...we allow the Holy Spirit to change and refine us into Christ’s image.

Let’s be careful, however, that we don’t use them as part of a daily “to do” list. The disciplines are not an end in themselves, or a way to earn favor with God. They are tools that help us seek God, get to know Jesus better, and to live life as Jesus taught.

My prayer today, as we prepare to journey to the Cross, is two-fold. Seek Jesus with all our heart. Use spiritual disciplines like Solitude, Silence, Fasting, Simplicity, Sacrifice, Study, Worship, Prayer and Meditation, and Fellowship to realign our lives with a single goal—to focus on the Savior.

God’s blessings to each of you.

Food Pantry News

We have been steadily increasing in the number of people visiting St. John's Food Pantry each week. COVID has made it difficult for all of us, and the pantry is no exception. We are seeing the return of well-known faces, and met we have some new clients, too! Ms. Alice and Ms. Johnnie are new to our pantry...very sweet ladies in their 80s, and it was Ms. Johnnie's birthday the day she came to the food pantry!

Our numbers are not what they were pre-COVID but we are hopeful with time and vaccines, more of our clients will be back soon.

If you would like to help stock the pantry, we could use the following in our pantry (items that haven't been furnished recently by the Coastal Bend Food Bank)::

- * 12 ounce or 16 ounce jars of peanut butter
- * 1 or 2 pound bags of pinto beans
- * Canned soup
- * Canned pasta
- * Boxed Mac 'n Cheese

As always, your financial gifts (in any amount) are always welcomed and are put to good use! Thank you for your generous spirit.

Reminder

ONLINE WORSHIP CONTINUES!

Join fellow worshippers on Sunday mornings at 10:50 a.m. for the 11 a.m. online worship service. Great sermon, beautiful music, and video clips. Tune in at 10:50 a.m. to enjoy online chat with fellow church members and friends near and far:

<https://sjmethodist.online.church/>
or
<https://www.facebook.com/SJUMC>

St. John's United Methodist Church

5300 S. Alameda, Corpus Christi, TX 78412

Rev. Wade Lindstrom, Senior Pastor

(wade.sjmethodist@gmail.com; 361-960-4021)

Leslie Albrecht, Director of Student Ministries

Barbara Benton, Bookkeeper

Kim Bryce, Traditional Music Director

Marcia Caravantes, Organist

Brian Claunch, Sunday/Weekend Custodian

Adela Garcia, Children's Learning Center Director

Harley Mathews, Pastoral Intern/*Thy Kingdom Come (TKC)*

Adam Mathews, Worship and Online Technician/TKC

Cathy McRorey, Administrative Assistant

Hanna Patton-Elliott, Children's Director

Sharon Staiger, Nursery Director

CHURCH CONTACT INFORMATION

Location: 5300 S. Alameda, Corpus Christi, TX 78412

Church Telephone: 361-991-4342

Church FAX: 361-991-1840

E-mail Address: st.johnsumccc@gmail.com

Website: www.sjmethodist.com

OFFICE HOURS: (until further notice) Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.; Thursday, 9 a.m.-noon; closed Friday.

FOOD PANTRY: Open on Wednesdays and Thursdays, 9 a.m.-noon.

CHILDREN'S LEARNING CENTER: Open 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Call Director Adela Garcia at 991-4780 if questions.

WORSHIP SERVICES: In-person worship at 10 a.m. Sunday in the Community Life Building and 11 a.m. online.

INFORMATION ABOUT STEEPLE NOTES

Steeple Notes, a monthly publication of St. John's United Methodist Church, is emailed to members and guests as a PDF document and is published on the church website. Printed copies are also available at the church. Deadline for the March 2021 issue is Saturday, February 27.

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