



# FESTIVAL OF NEW BEGINNINGS

## Catalogue of Classes and Groups

UPDATED 8.24



### COMPANIONS IN CHRIST - FULL 28-WEEKS

Thursdays 6:30 – 8:00pm

September 12 – April 28

In Person and Online

Teachers: Rev. Hilary Marchbanks and Shelley Walters

Companions in Christ is a group that gathers weekly throughout the academic year for learning, fellowship, and prayer. The course is designed to help participants experience the love of God in unique and transforming ways. It includes meetings, self-reflection, Bible study, and an openness to where God is calling you.

*You can sign up for the whole 28 weeks, or you can sign up for short sessions (dates listed below).*

### COMPANIONS IN CHRIST - SHORT SESSIONS

**Part 1:** September 12 - October 10 Embracing the Journey: The Way of Christ

**Part 2:** October 17 - November 21 Feeding the Word: The Mind of Christ

**Part 3:** December 5 – January 23 Deepening Our Prayer: The Heart of Christ

**Part 4:** January 30 - February 27 Responding to Our Call: The Work of Christ

**Part 5:** March 6 - April 10 Exploring Spiritual Guidance: The Spirit of Christ

### PRAYER RETREAT

Saturday, September 14

9:00am – 12:00noon: Main session with introductory teachings and prayer practices

12:00noon – 3:00pm: Lunch and an afternoon session with a deeper dive.

In Person

Leaders: Shelley Walters, Laura Schwarcz, and Rev. Georjean Blanton

Gather with us for a time set apart with God for spiritual renewal and refreshment. Let the noise in your life settle, learn prayer practices with our breath, our bodies, our words, and the silence.

No experience needed.

Optional lunch is \$10. Childcare available in the morning.

### MID-WEEK MINDFULNESS: CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER TIME

Ten Thursdays, September 19 - November

12:00noon - 12:30pm

Online only

Leader: Shelley Walters

Need a mid-week time of centering and nourishment? Join us for a time of contemplative prayer practices, including silent meditation. All are welcome.

This could expand to include in-person gatherings or for future dates, depending on participation.

## SAINT JOHN'S 101

Two Sundays, September 29 and October 6

10:00 - 10:50am

In Person

Teacher: Rev. Hilary Marchbanks

Are you new to Saint John's and interested in learning more? Are you a member of Saint John's but want to understand more about our background, beliefs, baptism, and how to get involved? Pastor Hilary will lead both classes with long-time members.

## PUTTING YOUR HOUSE IN ORDER

Monday, September 23

12:00noon - 1:30pm In person only

OR

6:30 - 8:00pm In person and Online

Teacher: Tom Stanton



Your Generosity Matters: A Roadmap to Impact

How do we tell the next generation of the wonderful things that our Lord has done? How do we end well? Saint John's, in partnership with the Texas Methodist Foundation will facilitate a presentation called, "Putting Your House in Order." Tom Stanton of Saint John's and Texas Methodist Foundation will work with us as we consider how each of us can create a roadmap to help us tell the next generation about our own journey and that supports our family, friends, and those ministries each of us cares about.

Whether you are just starting your career and family or are at the other end of life's spectrum, you will find the information from this workshop invaluable.

## RESPONDING TO CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM

Three Mondays, October 7, 14, and 21

6:30 - 8:00pm

Online

Teachers: Midge Epstein, Ann Barlow, Becky Mitschke, and Shelley Walters

As Christians, our faith teaches us everyone is created in God's image and commands us to love one another. As Americans, we value our system of government and the good that can be accomplished in our constitutional democracy. "Christian nationalism" is a term you may have encountered in the press, on social media platforms and in casual conversations in your workplace, neighborhood, or church. It is a framework of thinking that threatens our faith and our pluralistic democracy. What is Christian Nationalism in America, and how should Christians respond to it?

In this class, we will learn what Christian Nationalism is, why it is a threat, and how we can respond. We will learn why some people are susceptible to this ideology, how to talk with them, and how to express our views in a respectful and clear manner. This is a class for all levels – those who are just learning of the term, Christian Nationalism, as well as those who are more well-versed. We will follow a three-part curriculum from Christians Against Christian Nationalism, which includes videos and documentaries. We will establish norms for the class at the outset, so that our dialogue, while frank, is also respectful and considerate.

## **BIRDING & SPIRITUALITY**

Tuesday, October 15 at 6:30 – 8:00pm Online

AND

Saturday, October 19 at 7:30 - 9:30am In person

Teacher: Nicole Netherton

Does being in nature bring you joy? Are you noticing birds in your backyard and want to learn more about them? Birding is one of the most popular pastimes in North America and is an edifying way to learn about nature, relieve stress, and cultivate a spiritual practice. In this session, we will be led by Nicole Netherton, CEO of Pease Park Conservancy, Travis Audubon Member, enthusiastic backyard birder, and Saint John's member. We will focus on both practical aspects of birding in Central Texas and will help you learn to look and listen for birds with mindfulness. Geared toward beginners, but all are welcome.

The learning session will be on Zoom the evening of Tuesday, October 15th (6:30-8:00pm), followed by a birdwalk on the morning of Saturday, October 19th (7:30-9:30am) at Sheffield Park (Northwest Park). At Sheffield Park, terrain is mostly flat and on sidewalks, but some uneven surfaces possible. Loaner binoculars will be available.

## **FINDING OUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS**

Two Mondays 6:30 – 8:00pm

October 28 and Nov 4 at 6:30 – 8:00pm

In Person

Teacher: Ed Wilder



The Holy Spirit gives every Christian at least one spiritual gift. In this class we will seek to identify the gift(s) God has given us and discuss what that means and how we might use our Gifts. Paul lists some of the gifts in Romans 12, Ephesians 4, and I Corinthians 12, such as, generosity, healing, discernment, compassion, etc. Spiritual gifts are not given for our own benefit but for the common good to strengthen the unity of the church. When we serve from our spiritual gifts, we grow in our knowledge of God's love, expand our understanding of discipleship, and find greater joy in serving God and others.

## **ENNEAGRAM WORKSHOP**

One-time, Saturday, November 2

9:00am - 4:00pm

In Person (with online option)

Teacher: Rev. Dr. Georjean Blanton

Have you heard people talk about the Enneagram or “their number” and wondered about it, or wanted to take a class but didn’t have time? Did you learn something about it a while ago and want to dig a little deeper? Are you interested in a spiritual tool that helps you understand what drives you to do some things you had rather not, or that offers clarity about the motivations of other people? This one day class, led by Rev. Georjean Blanton, our resident Enneagram coach, offers a basic primer to help the beginner (or those seeking a review) understand the Enneagram and identify their number, as well as an enhanced examination of triads and stances for those who want a deeper study. This class offers some tools for moving toward that balance. Cost is \$40 and includes lunch.

## **WOMEN'S RETREAT**

Friday, November 22 (early evening) through Saturday, November 23 (late afternoon)  
at Summer's Mill Center in Salado, TX

Connect with one another, hear hope-filled stories of faithful women, and share stories of our faith. Rest, create, and be inspired.

## **ADVENT-AT-HOME WORKSHOP WITH GUEST TRACI SMITH**

Sunday, November 17

1:00 - 3:00pm

In Person

Teacher: Traci Smith

Nationally renowned author Traci Smith will present her Advent: Faithful Families books to provide at-home, faith-filled Advent practices and activities. Traci's work helps parents, grandparents, and caretakers feel confident in sharing the Christian faith and all its gifts beyond just the Sunday morning learnings at Church.

While the adults learn, the children will be upstairs creating one of the pieces from Traci's book that they will take home and use during Advent with their families.

At the end of Traci's presentation children will join their families for the concluding presentation which will guide and teach how to use the take home the kids created.

Each family will receive a copy of her book.  
Suggested \$10 donation.

## **CHURCHWIDE ADVENT SUNDAY SCHOOL**

Four Sundays, December 1, 8, 15, and 22

10:00 - 10:50 am

In Person

Teacher: Shelley Walters

Journey through Advent with us as we draw near to Christ through the season. We will deepen our understanding of how God has drawn near to us by taking on flesh and experiencing what it is to be human. We will listen to the call for us to draw near to God by leaning into wonder, justice, truth, and one another. This large class is a combination of lecture and small-group, round-table discussion.



## UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH BOOK STUDY

Three Mondays, September 9, 16, and 21  
12:00 noon - 1:15 pm  
In Person and Online  
Teacher: Cathy Barton



Our book is *Saving Us* by Katharine Hayhoe. Contact Cathy Barton for zoom link.

*Saving Us* explores how we begin a conversation with friends, families and acquaintances about climate change and practical ways that we can reverse this trend. Katharine Hayhoe, a climate scientist and activist for the Nature Conservancy and a Distinguished Professor at Texas Tech University states, "In this book I want to show you how to have conversations that will help you to reconnect with family and friends in real life, building genuine relationships and communities rather than tribes and bubbles."

## UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH CIRCLES

Three women's circles gather for service, community, and study.  
Various days, times, areas of focus and activities.

### MIRIAM CIRCLE MEETS:

Tuesday, September 3 at 10:00am

Circle up for Coffee at Galaxy Cafe, 8127 Mesa

Thursday, September 12 at 4:30 - 6:00pm

Happy Hour and Service project at Carolyn Boyle's home, 7509 Stepdown Cove

Wednesday, September 18 at 10:00am

Circle up for Coffee at Galaxy Cafe

Friday, September 27 at 12:00noon

Program by Jane Bost with light lunch, 5900 Wynona

### ANNA CIRCLE MEETS:

Tuesday, September 10 at 6:00 - 7:30pm

Climate Change and Our Response

Program speaker is former President of the Sierra Club (Peckham's neighbor)  
at the Youth House, 5908 Wynona

### HANNAH CIRCLE MEETS:

Tuesday, September 10 at 10:00am - 12:00noon.

Getting going for the fall. Fellowship and service planning for this year.  
Contact Vicki Kullberg for more information.

## MEN'S COVENANT GROUP

Gather at Jim's at Burnet and 183 for breakfast, fellowship, prayer, study, and discussion.  
Every Friday at 7:00 am

## VETERAN'S GROUP

Veterans gather to share stories and be in community together across different decades of service.  
First Tuesday of each month  
6:30 pm – 7:30 pm

## **JOURNEY SUNDAY CLASS**

Our Young Adult and Journey Sunday School classes have combined to create something new. Gather together for community, study, and discussion.

Led by Rev. Randy Knighten.

Meets in Room 210 Sundays upstairs in the main building at 10:00am

## **OPEN CIRCLE SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS**

The Open Circle class enjoys meaningful discussion on each week's scripture while reflecting on how it intersects with our lives and the world around us, following Saint John's Bread for Our Journey curriculum. All guests are welcome!

Led by Shari Holland.

Meets in Room 201 upstairs in the main building Sundays at 10:00am

## **SEEKERS SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS**

We are a group of Christians working to develop a closer and ongoing relationship with our Lord through prayer, study, discussion and utilizing the Bible as our principle reference.

Fellowship: We seek to provide, within our class, closeness through prayer for each other, comfort in times of need, social activities to bring us closer together.

Service: We aim to incorporate our outreach into the activities of the church and community. We encourage each other to be active volunteers and to contribute monetarily to mission work.

Class Structure: We operate through class officers and committees. We vote on projects and mission opportunities to make decisions.

Meets in the Fellowship Hall downstairs in the main building Sundays at 10:00am

## **WESLEY SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS**

This class is centered on Bible study. Scholarly, well-researched lectures are led by various teachers. Six to eight lessons are typically devoted to the study of one book or topic from scripture, rotating between the Old and New Testaments.

Led by Roy Walker.

Meets in Room 208 upstairs in the main building. Sundays at 10:00am

## **STORYTELLING SISTERHOOD**

The Saint John's Storytelling Sisterhood meets every Thursday at 10:00am at Susie Brown's home. We write our memories during the week and share with our group at the meeting. Our purpose is about fellowship, providing a safe space and listening with love. Please join us.

Susie can be reached at 972-816-1372 for text or call or [brownsudan@att.net](mailto:brownsudan@att.net).

## **THREADERS**

The Saint John's Threaders are people who are passionate about knit and/or crochet, who share their enthusiasm for the various fiber arts, and who support church ministries such as Congregational Care by making prayer blankets and shawls or hats for the homeless.

Meets in the church library twice a month on:

Second Thursdays 6:30 – 8:00 pm

Fourth Thursdays 1:30 – 3:00 pm





## CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Our children's ministry is full of opportunities for kids to get to know Church as a loving place and to learn God's love for them. From our nursery care, to Sunday School, to family events, and our Agape (4th and 5th grade) Group, there is a place for all.

Contact [Laura@stjohnsaustin.org](mailto:Laura@stjohnsaustin.org) for more information.

## YOUTH MINISTRY

Our Youth Group is a great community for teens with fun events and good support through the middle and high school years.

Youth Group meets most Sunday afternoons 4:30 - 6:00pm.  
We gather for games and creative events - including Life-Sized Clue and the Chopped Mystery Box cooking challenge - and we always end with Christ Candle prayer time.

Contact [Shelley@stjohnsaustin.org](mailto:Shelley@stjohnsaustin.org) for more information.

## JOY SENIOR ADULT MINISTRIES

Our senior adults enjoy fun, food, and fellowship together often! Join us for outings around town, Lunch Bunch meals, game days, and more.

Contact [Laura@stjohnsaustin.org](mailto:Laura@stjohnsaustin.org) for more information.



## SAINT JOHN'S LIBRARY

Our Library is full of books to expand your understanding, to listen to new voices, and learn something new!

Come browse and check out books in Room 211 on Sunday mornings until 12:30pm or search our collection online at [stjohnsaustin.org](http://stjohnsaustin.org). The Library is under the Resources link.

Questions about the Library? please contact Jaci Walker at [jgwalker4@gmail.com](mailto:jgwalker4@gmail.com).

## BREAD FOR OUR JOURNEY

Bread for Our Journey is an online approach to faith development you can do as an individual, in informal small groups, or as a family.

This weekly collection of reflections is intended to deepen our understanding of scripture, to open our awareness of different voices and wisdom, and to broaden our spiritual practices that bring creativity and justice to our world.

Visit [stjohnsaustin.org/ministries/bread-for-our-journey/](http://stjohnsaustin.org/ministries/bread-for-our-journey/) to get on our weekly email list.

## THE SAVVY ALLY BOOK STUDY

Five Tuesdays, September 3 - October 1

6:45 - 8:00pm

In person at University UMC or Online

Teacher: Rev. Nancy Mossman, coordinator of the Rio Texas Reconciling Ministries Team

Join us to learn how to practice creating safe and inclusive spaces for LGBTQ+ people and the skills we need in order to be intentional allies. Rev. Nancy Mossman, the coordinator for the Rio Texas RMN Team, will be the facilitator and lead this five-week book study.

This book study is for everyone as we all have space to grow and learn about creating inclusive spaces for others.

Nancy will use "The Savvy Ally, A Guide for Becoming a Skilled LGBTQ+ Advocate, 2nd edition," by Jeannie Gainsburg. Purchasing the book and reading it with the group will be helpful but not required.

More info at [uumc.org/events/the-savvy-ally-tuesday-night-lights](http://uumc.org/events/the-savvy-ally-tuesday-night-lights)

## JUSTICE FOR OUR NEIGHBORS BOOK STUDY

Various dates and times listed below, starting mid-September

Online only

Teacher: Rev. Lizzie Wright, Executive Director of JFON Austin

This September, overlapping with Hispanic Heritage Month, JFON Austin will be offering a 6-week study online called "Centering Immigrant Voices for Faithful Growth," a new online study of The Truth in Our Stories, the book and video project JFON collaborated with Undocumented Stories to produce in 2022.

For this study, Executive Director Lizzie Wright will draw on her role as a pastor in the United Methodist Church to lead questions and discussion of the stories, data, and scripture in a Christian context.

If you are curious about the study, you can read more here. JFON will be offering 4 session options to help accommodate the reality of modern schedules, especially in the school year. Those session options are:

- Thursdays at 11:00am
- Thursdays at 7:00pm
- Saturdays at 10:00am
- Sundays at 5:00pm

These will start the week of September 12th, 14th, and 15th. These sessions will be offered in tandem, so if you have a conflict one week (or five weeks), you can drop in another session so you don't miss out. And since the study is online, you will be gathering with folks from all over.

More info at [bit.ly/jfonaustinbookstudy](http://bit.ly/jfonaustinbookstudy)

