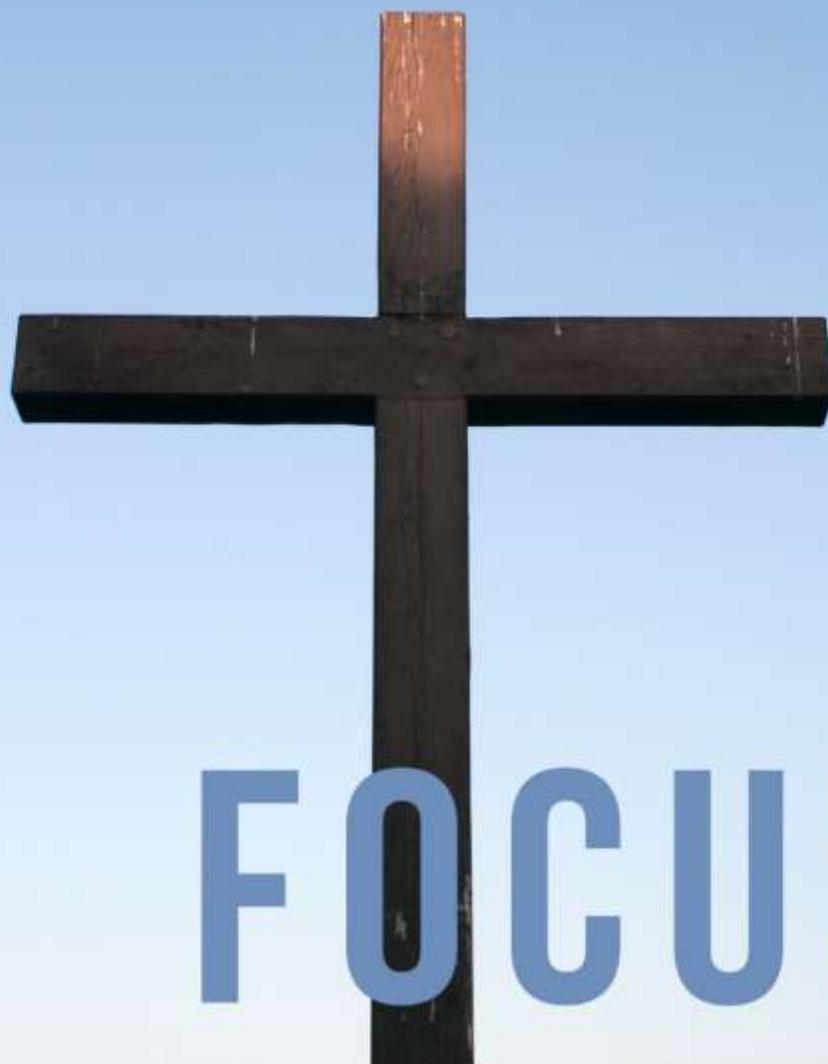


ST. JOHN'S UMC

April 2024 / Issue 4



FOCUS



“I PRAISE YOU BECAUSE I AM FEARFULLY AND WONDERFULLY MADE; YOUR WORKS ARE WONDERFUL, I KNOW THAT FULL WELL.” – Psalms 139:14

Meet Your Church Family

by Rev. Darren Walker

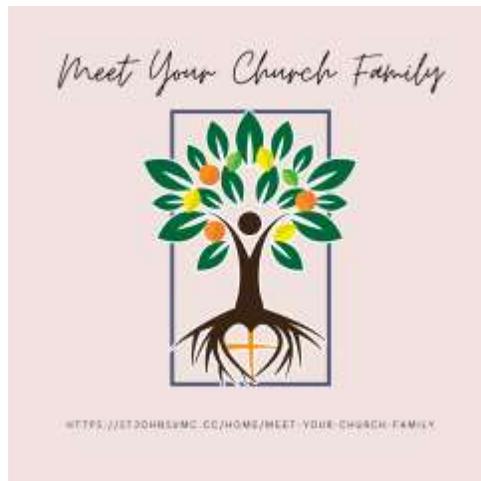
We have started something new! Maybe you have already seen it. If not, look in the newsletter. Check out the website at <https://stjohnsumc.cc/home/meet-your-church-family>. “Meet Your Church Family” will be an ongoing series of articles by Dorothy Newcombe about the amazing people in our church family. During a time when it is so easy to feel disconnected from one another, this is an opportunity to discover just how special each of us is.

In addition to enjoying the monthly stories, if you know someone you would like to suggest be interviewed, please let Dorothy or the Church Office know. If you are asked to be interviewed, please pray about it before answering. Most of us do not think we are special or interesting which is why we are asking your friends to suggest you. Remember this is not a competition or tell all. It is simply a fun way to learn about one another. You will see the article before it is published if you are interviewed.

Everyone of us has a story. Everyone of us is a miracle created by our loving God. When we share those stories, we create understanding and appreciation. The more we understand and appreciate someone, the more likely we are to connect with them in a positive way.

Grace and Peace,

Darren Walker



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April 2021 Events

- **Sundays: Sunday school classes meeting via Google Meet/Zoom or In-Person Homes**
- **Confirmation Classes Sundays 2:00 PM**
- **Mondays March 1—April 26: Financial Peace University Class 6:00 PM**
- **Wednesdays: Fellowship Groups meeting via Google Meet or Zoom**
- **Thursday, April 1: Maundy Thursday Communion Service 6:30 PM**
- **Friday, April 2: Good Friday Service 6:30 PM**
- **Easter Sunday, April 4: Easter Sunrise 6:30 AM & Easter Morning Celebration 10:00 AM**
- **Friday, April 9: MOPS Meeting 10:00 AM**
- **Monday, April 26: Single Board Meeting 6:00 PM**

Screen Time

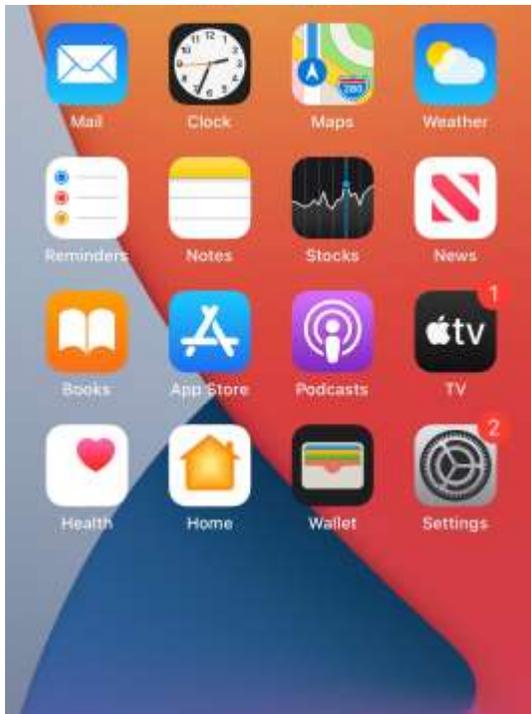
by Carolyn Henry, Congregational Care Coordinator

I got a new iPhone in early January. These are not called “smart” phones without a reason. About a week after I got the phone, I was surprised when something called a “screen time report” suddenly showed up. The phone had calculated how much time I’d spent on it from the week before. When I first saw it I was aghast – that had to be wrong! I couldn’t possibly have spent that much time on my phone. But when I looked closer, and saw the time spent on texts, emails, games, actual conversation, checking the weather, checking my steps, online shopping, reading the online news and just browsing, I realized it was correct.

Sadly, I don’t believe I spend that much “screen

time” with God. Fortunately (or maybe unfortunately) God does not present us with a weekly report about how much time we spent with Him. But he knows, He’s most certainly a lot smarter than any phone. Psalm 139 reads “You have searched me, Lord and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise, you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways.”

Seeing my “screen time” there in black and white – I am challenged to spend less time a day pursuing worldly interests on my new phone, and more time pursuing eternal interests with God.



Catch all the Ms. Kathryn & Boomer episodes on

- **St. John’s Barn Facebook Page:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/stjohnsbarn>
- **St. John’s United Methodist Church YouTube Page**
- **St. John’s website:** www.stjohnsumc.cc

The Lost Year?

by Kathryn Price, Director of Family Ministry

It is very quiet here in my hall. From time to time, I get visitors and JoAnne comes in too, but many days I’m here alone. Sometimes I go walking around the building and as I go by my darkened classrooms, I can hear the children laughing and learning together. I walk past the eerily quiet choir room and remember sitting between Virginia and Bonnie trying to learn the alto part for Sunday.

As I continue through the Fellowship Hall I can picture the tables with the men at one and the women at the other having coffee and catching up with each other and their families. It makes me feel as if we have lost an entire year.

I wonder what it will be like to come together again. I know the children have been growing and moving on. Many of the toddlers are now Preschoolers and the Preschoolers are in school now. I really have lost a year of sharing these milestones with them. Will they recognize me? Will they be happy to come back?

What will be different? What will be the same? I’m sure that God has a plan and that all things will happen according to that plan so I take comfort in knowing that whatever the result, God is with us.

MOPS - Mothers of Preschoolers

by JoAnne Gaytan, Children's Coordinator/Nursery

MOPS International began as a group of young Christian mothers in the early 70's. They named their group Mothers of Preschoolers and are now commonly known as MOPS. MOPS now has groups around the globe, and *"encourages and equips moms of young children to realize their potential as mothers, women and leaders, in relationship with Jesus, and in partnership with the local church."*

Last March, I took the responsibility of starting this new ministry for our church. I signed St. John's UMC up to sponsor a MOPS group and paid our yearly fee. I surveyed the information and started to make plans to talk to others about helping with the group. The MOPS program is well-planned but requires people in several leadership positions to run smoothly.

One week later, our world was disrupted by a little



thing called the coronavirus, Covid-19. At first, we were not concerned – a few weeks (to flatten the curve . . .) and everything would be back to normal and we could continue to plan for launching MOPS of St. John's in the fall. (Excuse me while I laugh in hindsight for a moment!).

An attempt at a video meeting, a restaurant meeting, and several meetings at a park failed to "spark" the group to life. In March, however, we were able to hold our meeting in the Family Life Center with seating well-spaced apart. We were joined by three young mothers (and an infant!). We got to know each other a little, had our lesson and discussion, shared some refreshments and made cute spring wall-hangings. Before we parted, we talked about seeing each other next month. One year later, MOPS of St. John's has begun!

New Phases

by Andrew Taylor, Former Director of Student Ministry

There is never a good way to start these sorts of announcements, so I will just start with ripping off the band-aid: I am stepping down as Youth Director at St. John's.

I have been involved with youth ministry in some capacity for my entire life. My Mom's youth were some of the first people to hold me when I was born, and if you had asked me a couple of years ago, I would have told you that I plan to leave this world the same way that I came in: surrounded by youth.

Life, however, has a way of throwing us curveballs, and God laughs at our plans. I have struggled with my health over the last couple of years, and it has become increasingly clear that I must make self-care my priority for a while. At the same time, my Grandmother's health has been declining as she battles leukemia. In the strange way that God turns all things to good, though, our

shared health struggles have strengthened our relationship. As it has become clear that I need to step back, it has also become clear that Grandma needs some help, and I am uniquely positioned within the family to be able to provide that. So that is what I am doing.

I will be visiting Grandma in Amarillo for the month of April, returning for Senior Sunday and Confirmation Sunday in May, and then making a more permanent move to Amarillo.

I am proud of the ministry that I have helped to build here over the last 7 years, and I know and trust that the youth of St. John's will continue to be incredible long after I am gone. Thank you to all the volunteers, parents, and (especially) youth for your love and support over the years. I hope I have brought as much joy to your life as you have mine and look forward to continuing relationships as my life and this ministry move into new phases.

Out of Exile

by David Pencil, Director of Music Ministries

A year ago, all our lives were dramatically altered by the Covid pandemic. Many of the norms of life that we took for granted suddenly became impossible to sustain safely. We were exiled from our normal way of life and driven into the wilderness of isolation. It has been a difficult year, but we are finally beginning to make our way back home. As the Covid vaccine becomes more widely available, we draw closer to herd immunity and the end of this pandemic.

Several barriers still stand in the way, however. Mutations in the virus have generated variants that may be more resistant to the vaccine than the standard form of the virus. This may lead to additional booster shots being required once these variants are more fully understood. Also, while fully vaccinated people are no longer susceptible to serious illness, it is still possible for them to transmit the disease to others. Their lower viral load makes this less likely, but it means that even those who are vaccinated need to be mindful of their interactions with those who are not. Finally,

with a greater sense of security comes the natural inclination to relax safety measures. But this also offers opportunities for the virus to infect those who would have otherwise been protected and prolong the effects of the pandemic further.

As Christians, our chief concern should be for the welfare of others. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 8:9 "Be careful, however, that the exercise of your rights does not become a stumbling block to the weak." We should never be willing to put others at risk for the sake of our own comfort or convenience but strive to show the love of Christ through our care and self-sacrifice. So, let us work together to bring about a safe return to normal life for all people. Get your vaccination, encourage your family and friends to do as well, and continue showing care for your neighbor by wearing masks and social distancing, so that we can keep the virus from gaining new footholds in our community. We are on our way home, but we're not out of the woods yet.

God's Truth

by Michelle Cousineau, Communications Coordinator/Executive Secretary

*Teach me your way, O Lord, that I may walk in your **truth**; give me an undivided heart to revere your name.*
~Psalm 86:11

Have you ever noticed how easy it is to judge people when you do not know them? Or judge your friends because you think you know how they should act or feel? And when they don't think, feel, or act the way you want them to, you feel betrayed, like all of a sudden you have no idea who this person is.

I have been working diligently to not judge people. I have been in a Bible study at Central Baptist in Round Rock and learning about how to walk in faith as we study Hebrews. One of the things that has stuck out to me in this study is the fact that I am not God, only God is God. We tend to judge people and push them to accept our truth rather than hold them accountable as God asks us to do. I know I have been guilty of judging people based on how I think they should think or act and I get upset accordingly, like I have the right

to tell them how to feel or act. I don't and I never did, only God does. And while we should hold people accountable for their sins, we should be careful that we do not judge others based on our own preconceived notions or tell anyone they need to live according to our own rules based on our truths.

God gave each of us our own minds to look at the world around us and discover the truth of God. God does not want us to judge each other, He wants us to love each other. He wants us to walk in faith together as His beloved children. The truth always has three sides: your side, my side, and God's side. Guess who actually holds the truth.

So, as we come into Easter and celebrate the joy of our Risen Christ together, remember to look for God's truth, not man's and judge accordingly.

Prayer Team Note

by Martha Arizpe, Prayer Team Chairperson



I do not know about all of you, but I am ready for Spring. I am primed for moderate temperatures, sunny skies, and outdoor fun. I want to plant stuff – almost anything, to be honest. When I was younger, I had a great backyard garden, which was prolific in its production of tomatoes and zucchini. A few other veggies, also, but Texas weather is especially conducive to great tomatoes and zucchini. As I recall, there was not much effort involved on my part in the production of these great-tasting vegetables. I planted them, watered them, and they grew. There is a certain pride in knowing that you personally have the skill of planting something, watching it grow, and then enjoying the fruits of your labor. Sort of a basic survival skill. Farmers everywhere are blessed with this feeling daily. But for a city girl, who never benefited from any 4-H experience, planting a successful garden is a real source of pride. (Flowers are fun, too: just not as useful for survival.) In a way, gardening is like parenting – the seed is planted, nurtured, and brought to fruition. Unlike gardening, a parent’s work continues long after “fruition”. My sons are in their forties, and they still, on occasion, call Mom and Dad for advice. And as parents, the pride we have in our offspring is a continuing gift. But this made me ponder a larger question: Is God proud of me? Am I progressing in life as He would want me to? Do my decisions make Him smile – or wince? Being a good Christian involves so much more effort than gardening. Did God take notice of my efforts, and was He pleased – or disappointed? When the time comes for me to be “picked” from this life to go on to the next, will I be ready? Will my Creator welcome me with open arms? Have I indeed earned a special place in God’s mansion? Oh, my goodness, how I hope so!

Blessings,
Martha Arizpe

Financial Peace University

by Michelle Cousineau, Financial Peace Coordinator

The journey to financial freedom can be tedious and overwhelming at times. You can also be ready to give up when things don’t go quite as fast as you would like or Murphy moves in with his cousins, Dumb and Broke. Our current class is small but mighty and are making great strides to becoming debt-free. I could not be prouder of the work I do for those in need and I hope that our church family continues to support the people of this community through this great program.

I tell you this to share the story of how we are helping to change people’s lives through bringing Financial Peace University to our community. I look forward to sharing more stories with you in the future.

The next Drive-In Communion Service will be on the first Sunday in May if needed. Please stay tuned for more information. Thank you.

Administrative News

FEBRUARY 2021 FINANCIALS

2021 Income \$78,768

2021 Expense \$86,967

Net (\$8,199)



2021 Holy Week Services

ST. JOHN'S UMC
511 E. UNIVERSITY AVENUE
GEORGETOWN, TX 78626

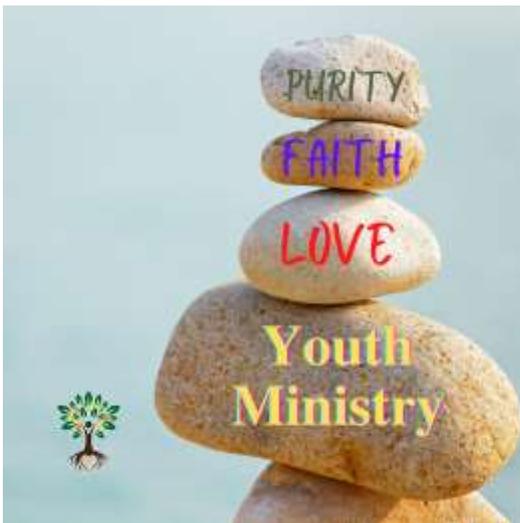


Thursday, April 1, 2021 6:30 PM Maundy Thursday Communion Service Family Life Center

Friday, April 2, 2021 Good Friday Service Sanctuary

Sunday, April 4, 2021 Easter Sunrise Service 6:30 AM Georgetown Community Center Sunken Garden

Sunday, April 4, 2021 Easter Morning Celebration 10:00 AM
St. John's United Methodist Church Front Lawn



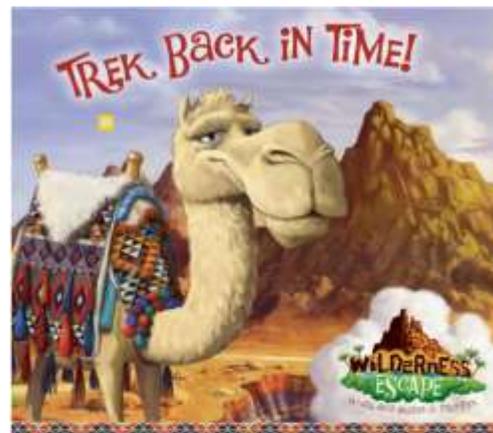
Sunday, May 16, 2021 @ 11:00 AM

Senior Sunday

Sunday, May 23, 2021 @ 11:00 AM

Confirmation Sunday

Join us as we celebrate our Youth!



Join us at Wilderness Escape Bible Camp, where we'll explore what life was like for the ancient Israelites. They've escaped captivity in Egypt . . . but now what? You'll craft cool projects in the Israelite Camp, race through the wilderness as you play games, visit with Moses, and eat some interesting new food. Plus, you'll meet lots of new friends!

St. John's United Methodist Church
311 E. University Ave • Georgetown

June 21st - 26th 9am - Noon

512-863-5886 stjohnsumc.cc

ST. JOHN'S UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

St. John's has been a part of the Georgetown Community for over 140 years.

We started as a group of Swedish immigrants who joined together in their homes to study, worship and pray and built our first church building in 1882. At that time, we were known as the Swedish Methodist Episcopal Brushy Church (Svenska Metodistkyrkan at Brushy).

The original church stood at the intersection of Westinghouse Road and FM 1460. Our church cemetery is still at this location.

In 1906 we moved to town, to our present home at 311 E. University Avenue, and in 1938 we changed our name to St. John's Methodist Church.

In 1968, when the Methodist Church joined with the Evangelical United Brethren Church, St. John's became St. John's United Methodist Church.

Come join us and share in our rich history and heritage of celebrating God's love.



St. John's United Methodist Church
311 E. University Avenue
Georgetown, TX 78626
Phone: 512-863-5886
Website: www.stjohnsumc.cc
Office Hours: Mon-Thur 8:30 AM—4:30 PM
Food Pantry Hours: Wednesdays 2:00 PM—4:00 PM

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