

St. John's United Methodist Church Focus

JESUS SAID,

by Rev. Darren Walker

All of my life, it was just sort of expected that we would spend Christmas Eve with Daddy's side of the family. After all, it was not just Christmas Eve, it was also Granddaddy's birthday. In addition to the candy canes, there was always birthday cake. "Silent Night" shared the piano with "Happy Birthday." We would celebrate Christmas by lighting candles at the church's Candlelight Service and celebrate Granddaddy's birthday by blowing out the candles on the cake.

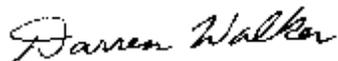
There are two things I will always remember about those special parties. The first is no one ever knew who was going to be there. It was a family gathering but my Granddaddy never met a stranger. He would meet someone for the first time the afternoon of the party and invite them to come and bring a friend. I guess he figured it was his birthday party and he could invite anyone he wanted. Every year we would play "Does Anyone Know That Person Over There?" Some of these people came every year. Several of them got unofficially adopted into the family.

The other thing I want to mention is the present Granddaddy gave to his grandchildren, nieces, nephews, in-laws, outlaws, new friends, and the occasional person who wandered through because the door had been left open that even Granddaddy did not know. Whether you were a relation by blood or by choice, even if you had come as the friend of a friend of a friend, Granddaddy had a new, crisp two-dollar bill for you. The same present, every year, for everybody. I have no idea where he got all of those two-dollar bills. Sometimes, I would imagine a huge, secret bank vault under his house, stacked floor to ceiling with bundles of the bills. At other times, I just assumed the federal government had a mint that printed them just for Granddaddy.

These two birthday traditions taught me quite a lot about the love of God. It is most important to remember, especially at Christmas time, that God invites everyone to the Kingdom of Heaven Salvation Party. Salvation is not a question of being born in a certain place to a certain family. It is not a question of status or accomplishment. You just have to be willing to accept Christ's invitation and show up.

The second thing those traditions taught me is God loves us enough to treat all of us to the same gift of Grace. It does not matter if you have known Christ for years or just met Him that afternoon, everyone gets the same Love and Forgiveness and Grace. There is always plenty for all.

Make the time to have a Merry Christmas. May God's Blessings be upon you and yours.



(Jesus said,) "Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find..."

~Matthew 22:9a (NRSV)

December Calendar of Events

- Dec 1: Hanging of the Greens Service
- Dec 6-7: Christmas Stroll Parking Lot Fundraiser
- Dec 7: ATFT Meeting
- Dec 8: Church Under the Bridge - Austin, TX
- Dec 14: Saturday with Santa
- Dec 15: Caroling with Shut-ins
- Dec 15: Old Fashion Christmas Dinner
- Dec 18: Gingerbread House Build
- Dec 21 - Dec 23: Live Nativity
- Dec 24: Christmas Eve Services
6:00pm - Family Service - Family Life Center
8:00pm - Candlelight Service - Sanctuary
- Dec 25: Julotta Service
6:00am
- Dec 23 - Dec 28: Office closed in observance of Christmas
- Dec 31 - Jan 1: Office Closed in observance of the New Year
- [Weekly Events](#)

Wednesday Wesley Value Meal in Family Life Center at 5:15 pm

Youth Bible Study in Youth Loft at 6:00 pm

Choir Rehearsals

St. John's Ringers in Room #110 at 6:30 PM

Chancel Choir in Choir Room #101 7:30 pm

• Fellowship Groups

Every Wednesday evening in Room #112 & Room #114 - 6:00 pm

Love God. Love Others.

WE ARE HIS PEOPLE

by Carolyn Henry, Congregational Care Coordinator

“And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their sheep at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them ...and said to them “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.” (Luke 2:8-11) We are very familiar with this story, but did you ever wonder why angels appeared to shepherds to tell them of the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus? Shepherds were very low on the social ranking scale – far below kings or other rulers. But they had a special job to do, and that was to take care of every single sheep in their flock.

We are all familiar with Psalm 23 and know that “The Lord is my shepherd.” There are several references in the New Testament that refer to Jesus as being the Good Shepherd. One of my favorite verses is from John 10:27 where Jesus tells the religious leaders that “My sheep listen to my voice. I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand.”

As we experience Christmas this year, may we rejoice as the shepherds when they were told by the angel that the Messiah was born and sing with the Psalmist “Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his. We are his people, the sheep of His pasture.”

EAGER ANTICIPATION VS. FAITHFUL PATIENCE

by David Pencil, Director of Music Ministries

Advent is an interesting season, combining themes of eager expectation and faithful patience as Christmas steadily approaches. As I think about the music ministries at St. John's, I feel very similarly. We continue to wait on the Lord's guidance in the search for a new Chancel/Bells director, and are immensely grateful to Susan Isenhour for her continued support with the Chancel Choir during this season.

I am also excited to take the joy of this season out to members of St. John's who are no longer able to attend services regularly. On December 15th, members of the Chancel Choir and Praise Band will go caroling to a number of our homebound members. This is an open invitation to any in the congregation who would like to participate. If you are not a member of one of these music groups and would like to be included in further communications about this outing, please send an email to music@stjohnsumc.cc.

David Pencil
Director of Music Ministries
St. John's United Methodist Church
(512) 560-6079 cell phone
music@stjohnsumc.cc - work email

1 Peter 3:15 “but in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, ready at any time to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.”

VERY EARLY CHRISTMAS DAY

by Kathryn Price, Director of Family Ministries

I had recently turned eight years old. My younger brothers, Brad and Kyle, were five and two respectively. That Christmas eve we had gone to bed eagerly awaiting the arrival of Santa. It was a cold night so Kyle was cuddled up in my bed when Brad came rushing in, jumped on the bed and loudly whispered, "Santa came! He's been here!"

I turned and picked up Kyle and we hurried to the living room. And there, in splendor and glory, were all the things we had asked Santa to bring us! As we squinted in the bright tree lights, I saw the huge stuffed tiger I had longed for, the baseball and glove Brad wanted and Kyle began to play with some little toy he liked.

"What are you kids doin' out of bed?!" It was our dad. He was standing in the door way shielding his eyes from the light. "Look, Daddy, Santa came!" exclaimed Brad. "I don't care," said Dad, it's THREE O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING! Get back in bed!"

We went, but three hours later we were back. It was a great Christmas that we all remember as the "Very Early Christmas Day"



CHRISTMAS SABBATH

by Andrew Taylor, Director of Youth Ministry

Christmas has long been an odd holiday for me. You see, for most of my childhood my mother worked at a church. My Grandma is a pastor. Several of my cousins have spent time working at churches. Many of my extended family members are very involved in their local congregations, even if they aren't employed there. All of this combines to make Christmas a very, very busy time of year for most of my family.

So, we do our big gatherings and celebrations at Thanksgiving. Christmas becomes a time of celebration with our church families, followed by a time of quiet rest on Christmas day. We breathe a sigh of relief and try very hard to not do anything. That quiet rest with loved ones is my favorite Christmas tradition. It's a time of true rest and sabbath, which is all too rare in our world. I pray that each and every one of you finds a time of sabbath this Christmas season. Time to let the hustle and bustle fall away, and just be present with your loved ones.

The Season of Advent

St. John's United Methodist Church

*Hanging of the Greens Service
Sunday, December 1, 2019 5:00 PM
Sanctuary*

*Christmas Stroll Parking Lot Fundraiser
Friday, December 6 - Saturday, December 7, 2019*

*Church Under the Bridge
Sunday, December 8, 2019
Austin, TX*

*Saturday with Santa
Saturday, December 14, 2019 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Sanctuary*

*Old Fashion Christmas Dinner
Sunday, December 15, 2019 6:00 PM
Family Life Center*

*Gingerbread House Build
Wednesday, December 18, 2019 5:30 PM
- 7:00 PM Family Life Center*

*Live Nativity
Saturday, December 21 - Monday, December 23, 2019
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM St. John's Front Lawn*

311 E. University Avenue Georgetown, TX 78626

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

Monday, December 23 - Saturday, December 28, 2019

Monday, Tuesday, December 31, 2019 - Wednesday, January 1, 2020

We pray you will have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

The Season of Christmas

Jesus is the ultimate present

Tuesday, December 24, 2019

Family Christmas Eve Service

6:00 PM - Family Life Center

Candlelight Christmas Eve Service

8:00 PM - Sanctuary

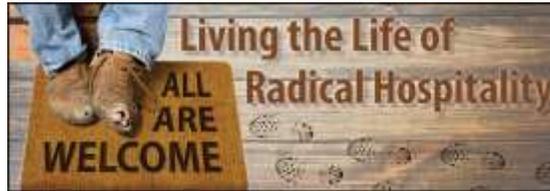
Wednesday, December 25, 2019

Julotta Service

6:00 AM - Sanctuary

OCTOBER 2019
FINANCIALS

2019 Income \$465,571
2019 Expense \$489,835
Net (\$24,264)



NOVEMBER 2019 ATTENDANCE

2019 Total 580 with 145 average per Sunday
2018 Total 680 with 170 average per Sunday

THANK YOU!

Thank you to everyone who filled a shoe box for a child this year. Because of your generosity, we filled all 50 of the boxes and sent them to children who need to know that God knows them and loves them.

Also, a big thank you to LouAnne Case and Linda Gusnowski for getting this project organized! We are blessed with the most incredible servants of Christ.



Photo credit: LouAnne Case

WHITE ELEPHANT

by Christine Studebaker, Office Manager & Membership Secretary

For 7 years my family would have a White Elephant gift exchange. Each year, the gifts were disguised with elegant wrapping paper and matching bows. One year, instead of the gift, there was a polaroid picture of the item boxed up in a neatly wrapped package. It was easy for us to forget that it was merely a White Elephant gift exchange until the gifts were revealed. The term "white elephant" is defined by Google as "an extravagant, but impractical, gift that cannot be easily disposed of" and "extravagant" some of them were. When I first married into the Studebaker family, I expressed to them my love for all animals, but I thought pigs were especially cute at the time, like Wilbur from Charlotte's Web. My new family did not take what I said lightly and decided to shower me with various pig-related gifts. Yup. You heard right - pigs galore! But the most memorable one I received was from a family friend who painted ceramics. The pig's head was wrapped up in a scarf with a towel ring pierced through its' nose. It was painted in bright primary colors and was meant to be bolted on the wall next to the sink. The pig was no Wilbur by any means, but it meant so much to me that my friend took the time to make it and that I was included in the family tradition. The pig head is now carefully tucked away in the garage to avoid any horror it may bring. It is comical how much fun it can be to exchange ridiculous and not-so desirable gifts. This time together brought so much laughter and conversation over the years and was especially special when we could share this tradition with new family members. Each holiday season, I am reminded that making memories with your loved ones, celebrating life, and enjoying the little things are what really mean the most, even when the little things are pig gifts.

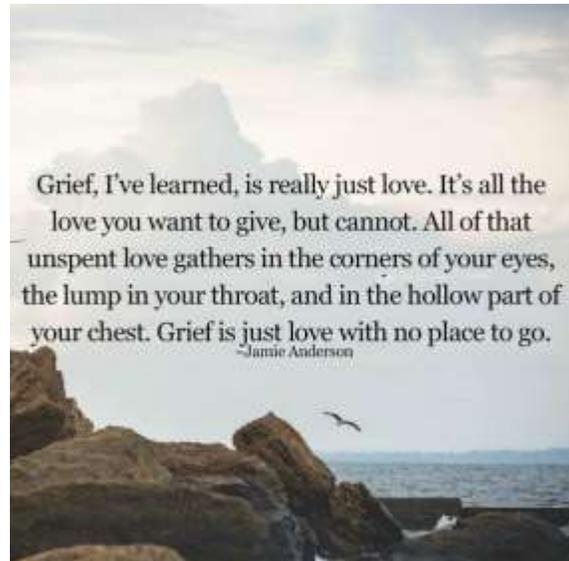
GOD'S MERCY AND GOD'S GRACE

by Michelle Cousineau, Communications Coordinator

Christmas time is a time of anticipation, joy, and time spent with loved ones. It is also a season of loss and grief. These are the hard parts of Christmas. Three years ago I lost my mom on Christmas Day. At 10:15 am to be exact. For those confused, she was my step-mom, but she became just as much my mom as my biological mom. Anyway, that morning my dad called and I thought he was going to do the usual Merry Christmas and how are the kids. He didn't. He cried, and then I cried. I cried for days. It felt like someone had ripped my heart out of my chest and stomped on it. Ever since then, Christmas has been hard.

Each year it has gotten a little easier to breathe on that day. Each year I decorate a little more the way she used to and celebrate the way I know she would like me to. Each year, I call my dad and we reminisce about how much she loved Christmas and how happy she was to have finally met Christ. Each year, I light a candle in her memory and pray the prayers of a child who has lost their parent.

This season is hard for anyone grieving the loss of a loved one. So, as you go through the season this year, remember those who are still grieving, those whose hearts have been ripped from their chests, those who do not know how to keep moving forward when their rock has gone. I pray you all have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and that the anticipation, joy, and time with family can penetrate the grief.



WEDNESDAY NIGHT MEAL AND ACTIVITIES FOR NOVEMBER

All Wesley Value Meals are held weekly on Wednesdays 5:15 - 7:00 in the Family Life Center

Wednesday, December 4, 2019

Wesley Value Meal Hosts: **East View High Band Moms**

Menu: Pulled Pork, Coleslaw, Baked Beans

Wednesday, December 11, 2019

Wesley Value Meal Host: **Youth**

Menu: Chili, Cornbread, Fritos

Wednesday, December 18, 2019

Gingerbread House Build

Wesley Value Meal Host: **Wesley Value Committee**

Menu: Sandwiches & Cookies

Wednesday, December 25, 2019

No Wesley Value Meal in observance of Christmas

Weekly Activities:

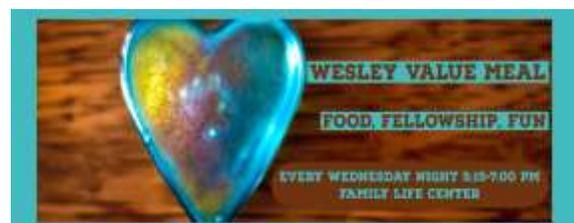
Wednesday Fellowship Group meets in Room #112 at 6:00 PM

Horizon Fellowship Group meets in Room #114 at 6:00 PM

Youth Bible Study in Youth Loft at 6:00 PM

St. John's Ringers Rehearsal in Room #110 at 6:30 PM

Chancel Choir Rehearsal in Choir Room #101 at 7:30 PM



**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

Follow us on



If you have a prayer or blessing you would like to share, please e-mail prayerteam@stjohnsumc.cc.

A NOTE FROM THE PRAYER TEAM

by Martha Arizpe, Prayer Team Chairperson

I have noticed – and you probably know this, also – that we live in a very loud world. Music is played in most restaurants – and it is not “mood music”, it is “sing-along”, high-volume music; people dining in public are either shouting into their cell phone or have it set on “speaker”; total strangers play their car radios on high and then roll down the windows, apparently under the mistaken impression that every other person they might encounter shares their taste in music. To combat this situation, the commercial world has created a solution: noise-canceling headphones. Now isn't that so sad? The world we live is so darn loud we have to buy special equipment just to get some peace and quiet. My main concern amid all this confusion is this one question: How in the world can we hear the voice of God? Are we allowing the voice of the Almighty to be obliterated by the racket around us? It's a challenge, no doubt. A great way to combat this problem is to exercise your prayer life regularly. It is much easier to hear the voice of God if it is something you are accustomed to listening for. So, practice, practice, practice – when the Lord speaks to you, it would be awful if you were distracted by the nonsense of life. God's voice is really the only thing that we absolutely, positively need to hear. Do not allow that Voice to be drowned out.

MONTHLY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

	Sunday, Dec. 1 Communion Sunday	Sunday, Dec. 8	Sunday, Dec. 15	Sunday, Dec. 22	Sunday, Dec. 29 Combined Worship Blessing of the Toys
8:30 Traditional in St. John's Sanctuary					
Worship Leader	Rev. Darren Walker	John Aleman	Rev. Darren Walker	Rev. Darren Walker	
Liturgist	Michael Studebaker	Kris Van Sickle	Dayne Carlson	LouAnne Case	
Ushers	Chip & LouAnne Case	Dayne & Pam Carlson	Clark & Nancy Bottlinger	Doyle & Shirley Channell	
Communion	Nikki Underwood & John Aleman				
11:00 Traditional in St. John's Sanctuary					
Worship Leader	Rev. Darren Walker	John Aleman	Rev. Darren Walker	Carolyn Henry	Rev. Darren Walker
Liturgist	Walt Hancock	John Aleman	Dean May	Carolyn May	Nancy Bacchus
Ushers	Darren & Becky May	Fred & Melissa Barhydt	Bennie & Virginia Davis	Patty & Bart Lee	Orville & Betty Tanner
Communion	Gene & Tina Lawhon				
11:00 Awakening in St. John's Family Life Center					
Worship Leader	Dave Pencil	Dave Pencil	Dave Pencil	Dave Pencil	
Preaching	Ken Sommerville	Andrew Taylor	Valerie Duncan	Rev. Darren Walker	
Greeter (s)	Bill & Annette Holland	Denise Williams	Jeff Cousineau	Michelle Champion	
Communion		Bill & Annette Holland			