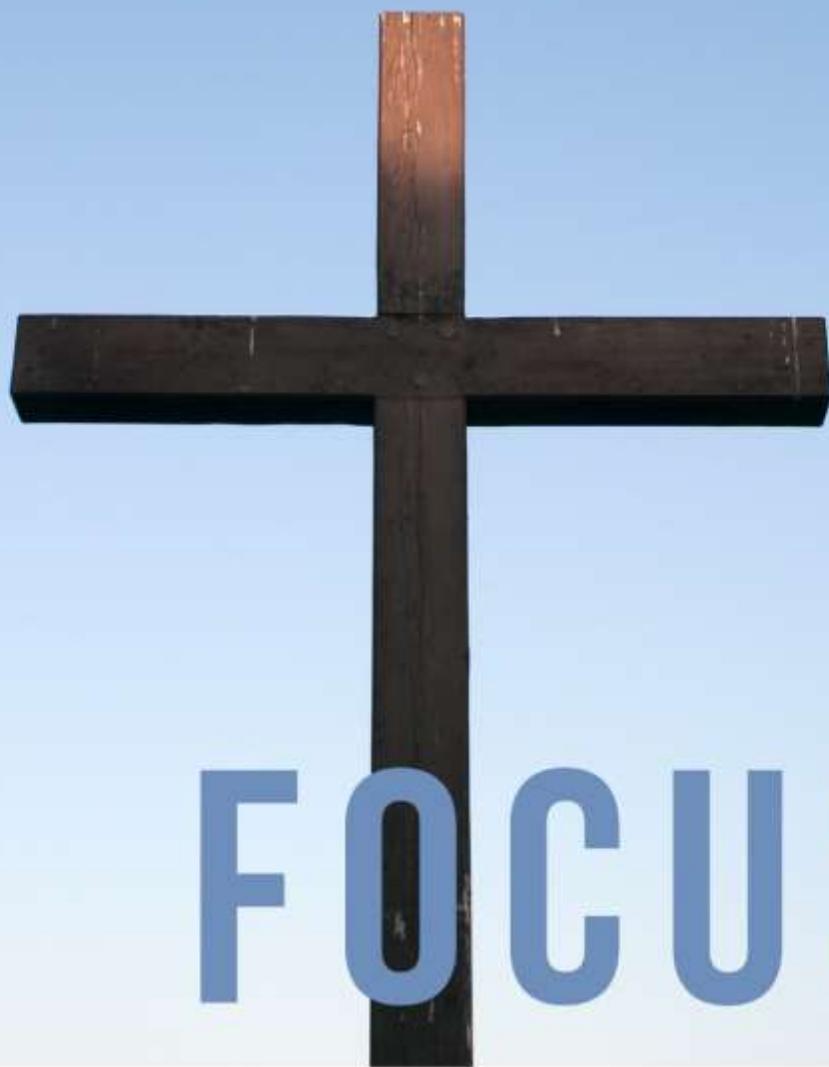


# ST. JOHN'S UMC

January 2021 / Issue 1



# FOCUS



“IN CERTAIN WAYS WE ARE WEAK, BUT THE SPIRIT IS HERE TO HELP US. FOR EXAMPLE, WHEN WE DON’T KNOW WHAT TO PRAY FOR, THE SPIRIT PRAYS FOR US IN WAYS THAT CANNOT BE PUT INTO WORDS.”

~Romans 8:26

## Praying for a Million

by Rev. Darren Walker

A few years ago, the musical group, *Bare Naked Ladies*, had a song called “If I Had A Million Dollars.” It was a good song. It may have been part of why I started praying every day for God to give me a million.

The boys were in elementary school and high school. With a million, I could get out of debt, pay for their educations, buy a house, and do some really cool things I had been wanting to do. A million would make all that possible. So, every day, for about a year, I prayed, “Lord, please give me a million.”

I believe in the power of prayer. I know God listens to us. I am convinced God has a vast sense of humor because God gave me exactly that for which I had been praying. One day, I was out front when the man next door came over to introduce himself. He had just moved in. “My name is Alvis. Good to meet you.” I introduced myself and we talked for a little bit. When I went inside, Charlotte asked me “Who were you talking to?” “That is our new neighbor, Mr. Million. Mr. Alvis Million,” I said. That’s when the penny dropped. Alvis Million. A. Million. God had answered my prayer and given me a million. It was my fault I had not specified a million dollars.

When I quit laughing, God reminded me I had everything I needed. I just needed to be a better steward of what I had and trust God more. It was an important lesson because my situation could not change until I had made some changes in me. So often, we pray for everyone and everything else to change when our prayer should be, “Lord, how do I need to change to make this better?” I am glad I learned this when I was younger. At times, I still forget it, but my life has gotten so much better when I have focused on being a better me than when I have tried to insist that others be better “thems.” God knows and loves us. Be careful of what you pray. God is listening.

Grace and Peace,

*Darren Walker*

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### January 2021 Events

- **Sundays: Sunday school classes meeting via Google Meet or Zoom**
- **Confirmation Classes begin 2nd & 4th Sundays of each month**
- **Wednesdays: Fellowship Groups meeting via Google Meet or Zoom**
- **Communion Sunday, January 3: Drive-In Communion Service 11:00 AM**
- **Office Closed January 18**
- **Monday, January 25: Single Board Meeting 6:00 PM**

## Ripple Effect

by JoAnne Gaytan, Nursery Manager & Children's Coordinator

Many times in conversations with other people about a problem we perceive, I jokingly end the conversation with, “well, if we ran the world . . .” We all know we can't literally “run” the world, or even change it in any real way on our own.

Mother Theresa said, “One person cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the water to create many ripples.” I think I've always had this concept down, because I try to keep from stressing myself out with overwhelming thoughts! However, it took me many years to realize that I am not the one tossing the stone, but the stone itself. If I don't take time to learn, grow, and better myself, how will I know what changes to make?

As you improve yourself with knowledge and grow closer to God, you will see what you need to do in your own life to cause change in others. I don't want to give false impressions – I'm still constantly working on myself. But at each step I see things that I can work on – worrying less, praying more, setting good examples, supporting a friend in a stressful situation and many more I am sure I have yet to learn. Hopefully at each step, God is tossing me across the water to create a ripple that will help, reassure, or guide someone near me. And that person can move my ripple along and add their own.



## Trust is the Change

by Kathryn Price, Director of Family Ministry

*“You must be the change you want to see in the world.” ~Mahatma Gandhi*

This quote by Mahatma Gandhi requires us to first decide what changes we want to see in the world. There are so many, such as peace, love, forgiveness, acceptance and so many others. Former Secretary of the Treasury, George Schultz, once wrote, “When trust is in the room . . . good things happen, when trust is not in the room, bad things happen. The rest is just details.”

Trust is the foundation for the other things that make a society strong. Without trust how can you have peace or love or forgiveness?

So, if trust is a change we would like to see in the world, how can I “be” this change?

I can be trustworthy. I can only state something as a fact if it is based on reliable evidence, not just someone's opinion (including my own).

I can trust others to be trustworthy and let them know I trust them. This is very important in parent-child relationships. Teens and preteens value trust and will usually try to be worthy of their parents' trust.

And I can trust God to always be there to love, forgive and bring peace to the world.

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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](http://www.stjohnsumc.cc)

## The Hero in My Life

by Andrew Taylor, Director of Youth Ministry

In case any of you haven't noticed, I'm a huge nerd (specifically a Fantasy nerd). My nerd-dom largely started with Star Wars, The Chronicles of Narnia and The Lord of the Rings as a child, but has since grown to encompass far more Fantasy games, books, movies, and TV shows than I care to admit (or you likely care to read through, though if you want suggestions I have many).

Although Fantasy stories come in many shapes and sizes, each with their own unique variety of tropes (from wizards and knights to mad scientists and airship pilots), nearly every Fantasy story revolves around a world ending crisis, and the forces of good aligning against the forces of evil to ultimately save the world. Noble, heroic sacrifices are often required, and the very fate of the world is on the line. Ultimately, the good guys win, evil is vanquished, and the world is saved.

I've always wanted to be that hero that vanquishes evil. Whether that's a result of my love of Fantasy or what drew me to Fantasy in the first place is an interesting 'chicken or egg' question, but the result is the same. Just like when Luke Skywalker abandons his training on Dagobah to save his friends, my first instinct is to rush in and try to fix everything or die trying (whether I'm properly equipped to deal with the situation or not).

It's taken me a long time to realize that I'm not the hero in every story. Each individual has to play the hero in their own life. I'm only the hero of my own story, and the dragons that I'm supposed to slay are unique to me. Most of the time, my job is to be Yoda, not Luke. I can't swoop in and save a world that isn't mine. I can, however, seek to advise, equip, and support heroes on their own quests, and that's really how we save the world.



## Countdown to Launch

by David Pencil, Director of Music Ministries

Through the season of Advent, we focus on the idea of preparing. Preparing for the celebration of Jesus' birth, preparing for his return, preparing for our own holiday traditions. As we move into 2021 and the promise of effective vaccines for Covid-19 continues to develop, we can begin to look forward to a time when we've truly returned to a state of normalcy.

This can also be a time of personal preparation as well. We know that to make a meaningful impact on our community and our world, we need to be walking in step with the Holy Spirit. Let's use this season of preparation to refocus our hearts and renew our commitments so that we can be ready to embrace the opportunities and challenges of a new year. The clock is ticking. Let's get ready to launch into action.

## Through Jesus' Eyes

by Michelle Cousineau, Communications Coordinator & Executive Secretary

Did you know that the Bible has over 100 verses on change, mostly to do with the transformation of our hearts and minds? In Romans 12:2, Paul writes, don't be conformed to the patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds so that you can figure out what God's will is – what is good and pleasing and mature. (CEB)

I have often had a problem with change, as I am sure many of you have. Any type of transformation is hard because we are being asked to let go of the old and grab hold of the new. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old is gone, the new is here!" Exciting and terrifying, all in one verse.

2020 has asked us to change a lot of things, from how we greet each other to how we work together, change is happening whether we like it or not. Some things have not changed, as a matter of fact, they have only gotten worse. The division and hate we see in the world right now can be

scary and not the change I want to see. So, what can we do about this type of change, the change that feels like we are being forced to fight each other rather than love as Jesus told us to do?

Well, that type of change starts with each of us individually. We need to look at ourselves and how we are adding to the discourse in our circles of influence and decide what we need to transform within our hearts and minds. I believe this is the hardest change Jesus asks us to make. In following Jesus, we are required to die to self and love as he loved us (John 13:34). We are required to look past our differences, both physical and emotional, and love our neighbors just as they are. That is how we transform a world of division and hate to a world of unity and love.

We need to figure out what God's will is for each of us, so I challenge you this year to look within to see what Jesus is asking you to let go of and what he needs you to grab hold of. I pray in 2021 we can see one another through Jesus' eyes.

## Prayer Team Note

by Martha Arizpe, Prayer Team Chairperson

This month's theme is about how to be the change you want to see in the world - a very timely topic for the first month in 2021.

But a big question comes to mind: how, exactly, does one accomplish this? I am thinking one should decide on what change, specifically, one wants to occur. Sunnier attitude in the general public? They could all be giggly with joy, but masks prevent us from seeing their smiles. A reduction in the number of drivers trying to scoot through a yellow light but ending up running a red light, causing gasps in onlookers? Alas, not something I can correct. Perhaps I should focus on something I might actually be able to accomplish. If I want to see happy people, perhaps I should see to it that I have a smile in my voice and a twinkle in my eyes. Maybe I can actually look others in the face, a safe six feet apart, and wish them a "Happy New Year". After all, if the eyes truly are the windows to the soul, I sure want my windows to be happy, clear ones. We are supposed to be doing one intentional act of kindness per week – I am challenging myself to do one DAILY! And I am not overwhelmed at the thought, because I know if I ask God to help me, He will see to it that I have opportunities. It will be up to me to recognize them. When Pastor Darren poses the question on Sunday morning – I will raise both hands! (And now I am bragging – guess I will also work on that little issue.)

Blessings,

Martha Arizpe





## Agape Dinner at Christmastime

*by Agape Meal Committee*

This last Agape Dinner at Christmastime was done with only remote contact via Zoom, but we feel like it still worked for the youth. They enjoyed the meal, sundaes, slushes, and stockings. We ended up with many prayer requests that Darren has captured.

Thanks to Ralph at CJ's Catering for the delicious Meal!!! So, appreciated!! Thanks to Mike at Sonic for the variety of slushes, sweet tea, and sundaes!! Also well received

We had Ralph discuss careers in food services, Darren gave us a Christmas lesson on St. Nicholas and God's Love.

We had Christmas Caroling!

Thanks to Rita and Sandy in helping with the stockings. Thanks to those of you for popping into our Zoom call and showing your beautiful smiling faces. Hopefully, the youth walked away knowing that they are a child of God, He LOVES them, and so do all of us!

The feedback from the Juvenile Center showed their thankfulness in helping our kids and the staff.

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### A Word of Thanks!!!

We would like to express our heartfelt thanks to all of you for the most generous gift of a bonus for each of us this Christmas. Your generosity and support of us in this season of sharing and giving is most appreciated. We are all so blessed to be a part of such a loving and supportive community of faith and we thank you for your expression of love this Christmas. We love you and look forward to all God will be doing in and through us in the ministry and mission of the St. John's Church in the New Year!!! Have a most Merry and Blessed Christmas and New Year!!!

St. John's United Methodist Church Staff

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## Pledge 2021

We currently have received 40 pledges totaling \$189,384. Thank you to all who have submitted their pledge cards. In order to have a complete budget, we still need 45 (minimum) more pledge cards to reach the same budget as 2020 which was \$402,000.00. If you have not gotten your pledges in yet, there is a form on the website at <https://stjohnsumc.cc/donate>. You can also contact Christine in the office at [officemanager@stjohnsumc.cc](mailto:officemanager@stjohnsumc.cc) or Shannon at [bookkeeper@stjohnsumc.cc](mailto:bookkeeper@stjohnsumc.cc) and they will be happy to help you set your pledge up for 2021.

Drive-In Communion Service  
Sunday, January 3, 2021 at 11:00 AM  
Tune Radio to 88.9 FM

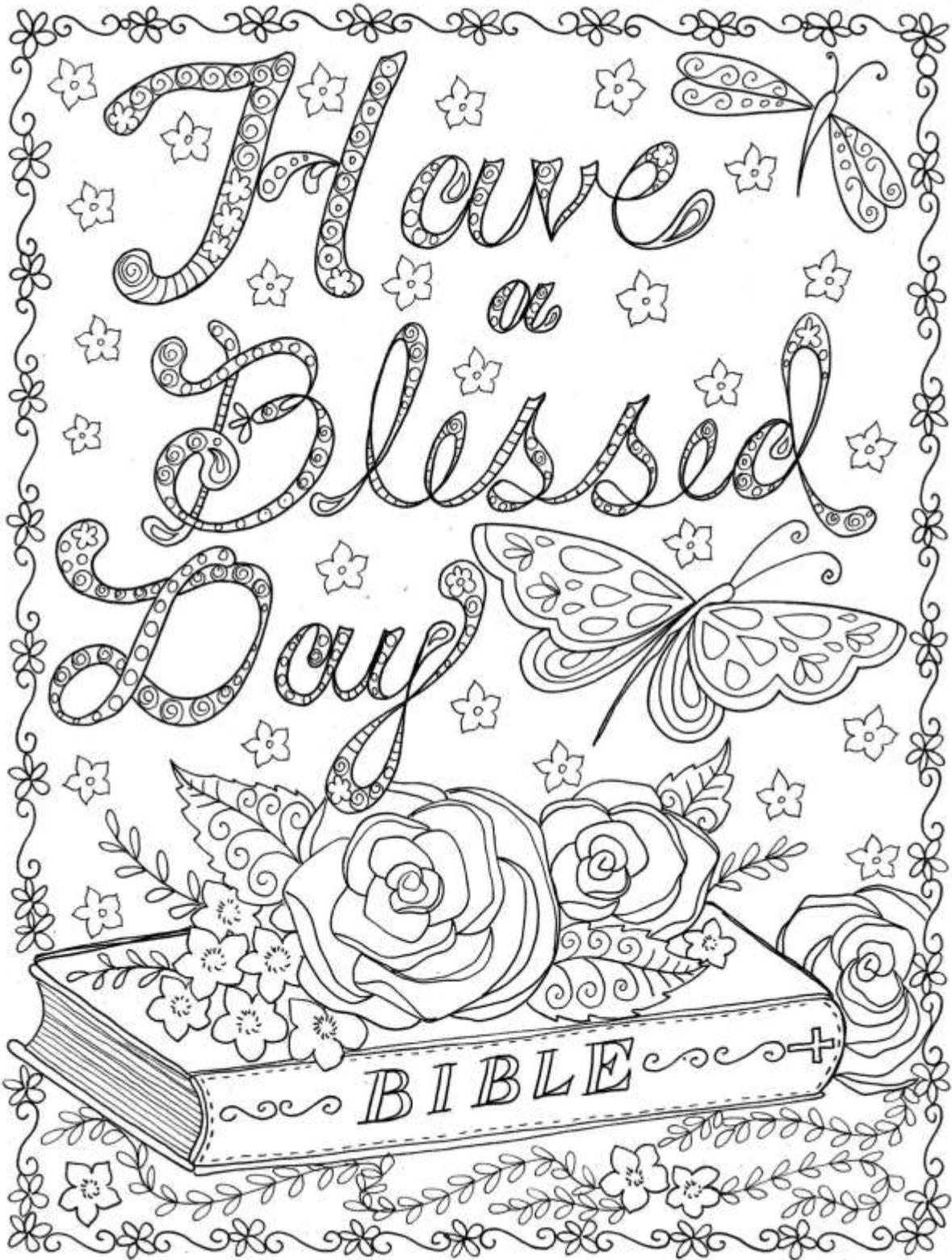
## Administrative News

### NOVEMBER 2020 FINANCIALS

2020 Income \$473,043

2020 Expense \$519,199

**Net (\$46,156)**



## 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](http://www.stjohnsumc.cc)  
Office Hours: Mon-Thur 8:30 AM—4:30 PM  
Food Pantry Hours: Wednesdays 2:00 PM—4:00 PM

Follow us on

