



# Focus Newsletter

“PLEASE PRAY TO THE LORD YOUR GOD FOR US, THIS SMALL GROUP, FOR AS YOU CAN SEE WE WERE ONCE MANY BUT NOW ARE VERY FEW. MAY THE LORD YOUR GOD SHOW US WHERE WE SHOULD GO AND WHAT WE SHOULD DO.” ~ Jeremiah 42: 2b, 3

## Christ is Always the Answer

by Rev. Darren Walker

I am at a time in my life when, once again I am having to go through boxes of old possessions. It is bittersweet. I find stuff from the past that remind me of times gone by and people I miss. Things surface and I have no idea why I saved that piece of junk or scrap of paper. Occasionally, I find a treasure I had forgotten I had. Those are the best of times. Those old treasures become new again.

From time to time, especially, during the season of Lent, I find myself going through my spiritual attic and basement. I find old habits that no longer work, rituals I had forgotten and occasionally an old treasure that had been set aside. When did I stop reading the Upper Room every day? When was the last time I studied Philippians? (Apparently, long enough ago I had to double check the spelling.) What about the friends I use to speak to all of the time but now I hardly think of them?

Life happens. It can get full. This is why we need to take time to take stock, clear out and begin a new chapter in our faith and in our lives on a regular basis. Lent can help us do this. Spring Cleaning for the Soul is another way to understand Lent. Remembering what makes us strong, clearing out what distracts us and getting a fresh start helps us to mature as Disciples.

If your life is too full for Christ, you need to make room. If your life is too empty, you need to fill it with Christ. Christ is always the answer. We just need to ask the questions better. Self-reflection, prayer, Bible Study and a small group can help us do that.

### March Calendar of Events

- Mar 2 - Apr 27: Financial Peace University class
- Mar 3 - Mar 31: Women's Lent Bible Study
- Mar 10: UMM Meeting
- Mar 16-20: Spring Break
- Mar 16: Life Line Screening
- Mar 16: Finance Committee Meeting
- Mar 17: UMW Berquist/Carlson Meeting
- Mar 23: Single Board Meeting
- Mar 27: Parent's Night Out
- Mar 28: Worship Committee Meeting
- Mar 29: Combined Worship Service
- Mar 30: Church Forum Meeting
- Mar 31 - May 12: Active Parenting Class

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St. John's United Methodist Church  
311 E. University Avenue  
Georgetown, TX 78626

Phone: 512-863-5886

Website: www.stjohnsumc.cc

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## Renewed Enthusiasm

*by David Pencil, Director of Music Ministry*

As we think on the theme of renewal this month, I am very excited for the renewed enthusiasm in our choir and handbells ensembles. As Chris Baker, our new Chancel Choir and Handbells director begins to take the reins of these groups, we as a church can take joy in a renewed sense of stability and vision in our traditional music leadership. We have already had some new additions to the choir, and my hope is that more members of the church (yes, that means you too) will prayerfully consider getting involved in music at St. John's, whether in the Chancel Choir, Handbells, or Praise Band. Chris and I are eager to help all who are willing to participate in the music ministry of our church.

So, let's get excited about what the future holds for music at St. John's, but also remember that such a future requires people to step up and participate. If you've been sitting on the sidelines, it's time to get involved! Please feel free to contact Dave at [music@stjohnsumc.cc](mailto:music@stjohnsumc.cc) if you have any questions or would like to join a group.

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## Renewal

*by Carolyn Henry, Congregational Care Coordinator*

As I look out my dining room window, I see the grass becoming green, and small buds are beginning to appear on the trees. Spring will soon be here! The earth is being renewed once again.

And even though it may seem to have happened overnight, in reality, the spring renewal takes time. Winter rain and sunshine are needed each year in order for the earth to be renewed. What we see happening is only a small part of what happens inside each plant and every blade of grass.

We too can be renewed – not only at spring time but each and every day. This doesn't happen just by chance. Spending quiet time each day in prayer and Bible study is essential for this to happen. It is an ongoing process. Spend time in God's presence, and He will nourish your soul, so that you will be constantly renewed. He will help you to understand His word and apply it to your life daily.

Isiah 50:4 “The Sovereign Lord has given me a well-instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary, He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being instructed.”



## Attendance: Who to Count

*by Christine Studebaker, Office Manager & Membership Secretary*

In February of last year, we received an email about Worship Attendance. The Bishop, The Executive Team and the Cabinet all did research and gave the church's specific instructions on what we count. The purpose of counting worship attendance is to help measure the strength, health, and effectiveness of a local church. In making disciples for the transformation of the world, numbers have value. They are not the only measure, but it is one important metric and one the CTC (Central Texas Conference) pays close attention to. It is the basic number that is used to qualify the market share in each community.

### **Who to Count?**

Count every single person present physically attending a worship service. This is for any time of the week and anything that qualifies as worship (preaching, scripture reading, communion, creeds, worship songs) This includes adults, youth, children and even infants. This includes nursery children during the worship time (not Sunday School hour). It includes ushers, greeters, coffee servers, choirs and even the Preacher!

### **Online Worshipers**

The key to counting online is having a "registration" of some sort. Facebook viewers need to register their participation in the worship service they are viewing. This participation can be live or later in the day or week.

### **Count children's worship, count youth worship, count confirmation worship**

Any weekly children or youth worship or annual confirmation worship should be added to the total.

### **Count Easter sunrise services, Christmas eve candlelight, Maundy Thursday.**

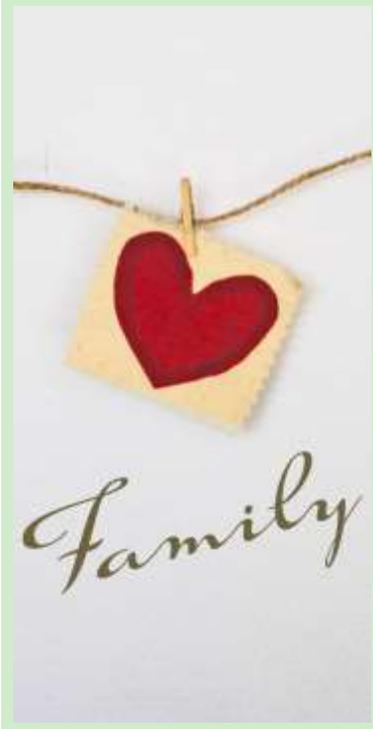
Yes, it's OK if people are counted twice that week or even if a music person is counted in more than one service.

Count nursing home worship services and assisted living services, if they include the elements of worship.

**What if it snows, sleets, ices, floods, hails or a tornado hits the town.** Count, but don't add into the years average worship attendance if it ices one weekend out of the year, only count 51 weeks and not 52. We want a clear indication of the health, strength, and effectiveness of a church.

Do NOT count funerals or weddings.

NOTE: This article was for worship specifically but remember we need your attendance for all meetings, events and celebrations! Thank you.



## Family Spring Cleaning

by Kathryn Price, Director of Family Ministry

March heralds the arrival of Spring and with it an urge to say, “Out with the old; in with the new!” It is a time when we go through closets, shelves and cabinets and clean out dust and cobwebs of the fall and winter.

Families can do this together as children find books they have outgrown and clothes they can’t wear and toys they forgot they had. As a family, you can clean the garage or attic, making space for new tools and other things.

But, what about your spiritual

“house”? Are there old habits to break or grudges to release?

Just as Christ cleansed the Temple in the New Testament, we can cleanse our hearts and minds of prejudices and ill feelings and ask for forgiveness as we move into a time of reflection and renewal. If you are a parent or grandparent, include your children and teens in the spiritual “Spring Cleaning” and be ready to welcome what new blessings God has in store for you.

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*“The ultimate celebration of rebirth:  
Christ’s resurrection”*

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## A Path Forward to Growth

by Andrew Taylor, Director of Youth Ministry

I love Lent. It's my favorite season of the liturgical year, more so even than the big celebrations of Christmas and even Easter itself. Lent is a season of self-reflection, repentance, and healing. We spend the season looking at our lives, examining where we have failed as disciples of Jesus Christ. Lent is also a time to examine our relationships with our brothers and sisters in Christ, and begin to heal wounds and invite wandering sheep back to the fold. And at the end of it all, we get to celebrate our renewed walk with Christ and each other with the ultimate celebration of rebirth: Christ's resurrection.

Part of the power of the Gospel is that there is always a path forward, closer to God, more fully in love with Christ, and better attuned to the movements of the Holy Spirit. Our sins and failures don't have the power to be a barrier to that - even death itself isn't - but, taking the time to recognize them allows us to correct them and continue to grow.



# The Lord's Prayer for Preschoolers...and You

by JoAnne Gaytan, Nursery Manager & Children's Coordinator

Want an easy way to renew your focus on praising God? Keep it basic and go back and think about some of your favorite Bible passages, prayers and songs and try to remember (or discover) what it's meaning is. It's so easy to repeat the Lord's Prayer or the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm, or sing *Amazing Grace* or *He Lives* by memory and forget to think about what we are singing, promising, or proclaiming.

When I taught preschool, I taught them the Lord's Prayer. I always made sure we discussed what it meant as they learned it so they would understand what they were praying. Since I don't teach a preschool class anymore, sometimes I like to go back and refresh my understanding of the prayer that Jesus taught us.

Here is my preschool explanation of The Lord's Prayer:

**The Lord's Prayer, Matthew 6:9-13**  
**<sup>9</sup> After this manner therefore pray ye:**

**Our Father who art in heaven,**

We are praying to God. He is our loving father in Heaven.

**Hallowed be thy name.**

"Hallowed" means holy or great. It's like

saying "God, Your name is awesome!"

**<sup>10</sup> Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.**

God's kingdom is on earth and in heaven, and we should live in peace and love each other and treat each other nicely so that earth can be like heaven.

**<sup>11</sup> Give us this day our daily bread.**

We can trust God to give us what we need every day.

**<sup>12</sup> And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.**

God, forgive us for our mistakes, and we promise to forgive others who have done wrong to us.

**<sup>13</sup> Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,**

God, help us do the right thing, even when it's really hard.

**For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

God is wonderful and powerful, and will be forever and always.

Amen means, "so be it," or "this is the truth, and I agree."

## WEDNESDAY NIGHT MEAL AND ACTIVITIES FOR MARCH

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

### Wednesday, March 4, 2020

Wesley Value Meal Host: **EVHS Percussion**

Menu: Lasagna, Corn, Bread

### Wednesday, March 11, 2020

Wesley Value Meal Host: **Kairos**

Menu: Chicken & Rice, Smothered Green Beans, Carrots

### Spring Break Wednesday, March 18, 2020

Wesley Value Meal Host: **NO MEAL**

Menu: **NO MEAL**

### Wednesday, March 25, 2020

Wesley Value Meal Host: **United Methodist Men**

Menu: Meatloaf, Mashed Potato, Peas

### Weekly Wednesday Activities:

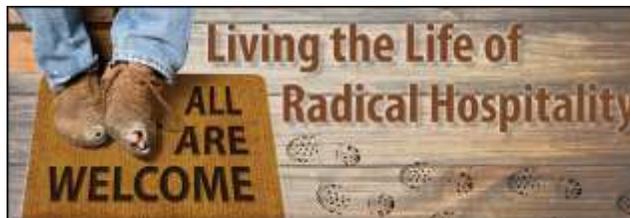
- Wednesday Fellowship Group meets in Room #112 at 6:00 PM
- Horizon Fellowship Group meets in Room #114 at 6:00 PM
- Youth Bible Study in Youth Loft at 6:00 PM
- St. John's Ringers Rehearsal in Room #110 at 6:30 PM
- Chancel Choir Rehearsal in Choir Room #101 at 7:30 PM

## JANUARY 2020 FINANCIALS

2020 Income \$67,681  
2020 Expense \$43,962  
Net            **+\$23,719**

## FEBRUARY 2020 ATTENDANCE

2020 Total 629 with 157 average per Sunday  
2018 Total 661 with 165 average per Sunday



## **HEBREWS CAFÉ**

Where Your Cup Runneth Over

Open Sunday morning from 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Sunday, March 1, 2020	Youth/Children/Family Ministry
Sunday, March 8, 2020	St. John's Ringers/Gospel Guys
Sunday, March 15, 2020	Seeker's Class
Sunday, March 22, 2020	Heritage Committee
Sunday, March 29, 2020	5th Sunday Church-wide potluck

## **United Methodist Women News**

*by Shirley Channell, co-President*



### **St. John's UMW - Berquist/Carlson Circle Meeting**

**Saturday, March 17, 2020  
2:00 PM Fellowship Hall**

***"Holy, Bold Women Lead"***  
**Presented by Shirley Channell**

## **United Methodist Men News**

*by Dean May, President UMM*



### **St. John's UMM - General Meeting**

**Tuesday, March 10, 2020  
6:00 PM Family Life Center**

***Helping Hands of Georgetown***  
**Presented by Bob Weimer**

# Preparation to Celebration

by Michelle Cousineau, Communications Coordinator/Executive Secretary

As spring approaches, I am preparing for a renewal of my own. We will be moving into a brand-new home built just for us. It is an exciting time to be sure, but it is also a time of preparation. There are items to go through and decide whether we are keeping them, putting them in the garage sale, or tossing them. It is amazing how much stuff we accumulate as we live our lives. For me, Lent is the time of season to prepare my own spiritual house for God's everlasting love. I am finding the only way to grow closer to God is to spend time with God and using my daily prayers and devotional time helps me prepare for my day.

Each day is filled with new joys and possibilities. I started a new habit at the beginning of the year that I am preparing to keep going through Lent and beyond. I sit each morning in quiet prayer and devotion before the kids get up. I read my Bible every day to put God's Word into my heart and prepare me for my day. During Lent we prepare our hearts, minds, and souls for Easter when Christ is resurrected and defeats death, for us. Isn't that amazing, Christ died on the cross for us, for our sins, for our mistakes and not-so-good decisions. It amazes me every day how much God loves us and to what lengths he goes to keep us close to Him.

I pray that as you prepare for Easter, you can sit each day of Lent in quiet conversation with God. Lent is what makes Easter so amazing, for without Christ's death there can be no eternal life. Likewise, without preparation, there can be no celebration.

“For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by His life.” ~Romans 5:10



Next class starts  
Monday, March 2, 2020 at 6:00 PM

**Register today  
at [fpu.com/1111793](http://fpu.com/1111793)**

Join us as we learn the ins-and-outs of  
handling our money God's way.

**First-Come First-Serve  
We have 3 memberships for \$99.00**

## Church Forum

*Discussion:*  
**Protocol for General  
Conference 2020**

**March 30, 2020**

**6:30 PM - 7:30 PM**

**St., John's UMC Sanctuary**

*All church members are strongly  
encouraged to attend*

**PARENTS NIGHT OUT**  
Friday, March 27, 2020  
6:00 PM - 10:00 PM  
Cost: \$10/child/\$25 family max  
St. John's UMC, 311 E. University Avenue, Georgetown, TX 78626



Classes starts  
Tuesday, March 31, 2020 at 6:00 PM

Session I: The Active Parent  
Session II: Cooperation & Communication  
Session III: Responsibility & Discipline  
Session IV: Building Courage & Self-Esteem

**Register today at  
[www.stjohnsumc.cc/calendarevents](http://www.stjohnsumc.cc/calendarevents)**

**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.

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If you have a prayer or blessing you would like to share, please e-mail [prayerteam@stjohnsumc.cc](mailto:prayerteam@stjohnsumc.cc).

**A NOTE FROM THE PRAYER TEAM**

*by Martha Arizpe, Prayer Team Chairperson*

At the close of a recent Sunday service, the congregation sang the hymn "Spirit of the Living God". It is a lovely single verse song, written in 1926 by a man named Daniel Iverson. It goes like this: "Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me. Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me. Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me. Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me." The sentiments expressed are similar to those found in the Covenant Prayer by John Wesley. Both writings reflect man's humble request that God use him in whatever capacity in which he is needed. Humility is an uncommon virtue: humble people may not receive much attention from their peers. And humans tend to crave attention – which is why these beautiful words are so important. They are a clear reminder that we need God's guidance and approval, not man's. May the Spirit of the Living God fall afresh on us all.

Blessings,  
Martha Arizpe

**MONTHLY WORSHIP SCHEDULE**

	<b>Sunday, Mar. 1 Communion Sunday</b>	<b>Sunday, Mar. 8</b>	<b>Sunday, Mar. 15</b>	<b>Sunday, Mar. 22</b>	<b>Sunday, Mar. 29 Combined Worship</b>
<b>8:30 Traditional in St. John's Sanctuary</b>					
Worship Leader	Rev. Darren Walker	Rev. Darren Walker	Rev. Darren Walker	Rev. Darren Walker	
Liturgist	Michael Studebaker	Kris Van Sickle	Dayne Carlson	Lou Anne Case	
Ushers	Gordon Eurom & Dick Wood	Bill & Sue Long	Clark & Nancy Bottlinger	Doyle & Shirley Channell	
Communion	Chip & LouAnne Case				
<b>11:00 Traditional in St. John's Sanctuary</b>					
Worship Leader	Rev. Darren Walker	John Aleman	Rev. Darren Walker	Carolyn Henry	
Liturgist	Virginia Davis	Gene Lawhon	Mary Lou Wells	Walt Hancock	
Ushers	Darren & Becky May	Gene & Tina Lawhon	Fred & Melissa Barhydt	Bennie & Virginia Davis	
Communion	Malcolm & Mary Lou Wells				
<b>11:00 Awakening in St. John's Family Life Center</b>					
Worship Leader	Dave Pencil	David Pencil	Dave Pencil	Dave Pencil	Dave Pencil
Preaching	Katie Lamoureux	Rev. Darren Walker	Ken Sommerville	Rev. Darren Walker	Rev. Darren Walker
Greeter (s)	Bill & Annette Holland	Denise Williams	Jeff Cousineau	Michelle Champion	
Communion		Bill & Annette Holland			