

# The Newsletter

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**Feeding Northeast Austin, body, mind, and spirit in the name of Jesus.**

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# July 2021



## 4th of July Hymn Sing

**Worship in July**

**July 4**—We will start the month with a celebration of hymnody that comes to us from US hymn writers and composers! Join us for a Sunday of storytelling and singing.

**July 11, 18 and 25**—Pastor Allison will be preaching a mini-series on the Psalms. We especially hope you'll join us for these Sundays to hear her!

## Communion July 11th

### Communion Update

In June, we began moving from family groupings for communion to receiving communion as individuals. Juice is placed in individual compostable containers and a chunk of bread will also be available in an individual container. We would ask that you return to your seat before opening the packs and eating and drinking. If you are unable to walk with the packs in your hand (because you use a walker or other assisting device), we will be happy to serve you in your seat. All containers should be left at the church to be composted through the city's industrial composting program (continuing to help things grow in Austin rather than adding to landfills)

We are so grateful to Mark and Kiki Corry who have been flexible and have worked with Pastor Cynthia over the last year to make sure that communion is available to us in an appropriately safe way.





# News From Pews



A little bit about Pastor Allison’s family:

Jay, who grew up in Lampasas, has been married to Allison for 25 years. He is a banker and enjoys yard work and home improvement projects.

Caroline graduated from Texas Christian University (TCU) in May and is already working on her Masters in Accounting. She loves being with her friends! They enjoy cooking, crafting, and going on adventures together.

Catherine graduated from Anderson High School in June and will attend Southwestern University in the fall. She is an artist and a thrift store shopper. She will spend the summer as a nanny for her little sisters and other neighborhood children.

Jayne completed 5th grade and is looking forward to attending Ann Richards School for Young Women Leaders in the fall. She loves all things related to math. She is very curious about the world around her and discovers new things every day.

Emma-Elisabeth completed 3rd grade at Doss Elementary. She enjoys taking dance and gymnastics lessons and is quite flexible! The things she loves most in the world are babies — dolls, humans, puppies, etc.



# July Birthdays

- 2 Brian Euwer
- 3 Mark McFarland
- 4 Debbie Dixon
- 14 Elizabeth Froebel Dahan
- 15 Gail Mohler  
Charles Batts
- 16 Betty Sampler
- 18 Darin Williams, Jr.
- 22 Billie Florence Lois Nixon
- 23 Kim Gray
- 24 William Friedrich
- 28 Gloria McPhail
- 31 Tyler Joshua Moore  
John F. Nixon



**Grace Avery Marcum** graduated from iUniversity Prep (an online High School) in Grapevine, TX. on June 5th. She is the daughter of Mark Marcum, her mother is Tanya, granddaughter of Pat & Patty Marcum. She plans

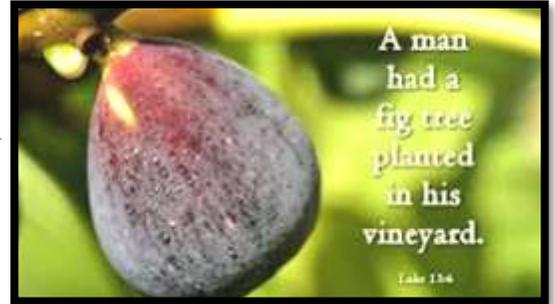
to study commercial dance and business at Austin Community College in the fall.





# The Pastor's Corner

*Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. So he said to the gardener, 'See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?' He replied, 'Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'"* (Luke 13:6-9)



After the Great Winter Storm/Icepocalypse/Big Freeze of back in February, I bemoaned all of the trees and plants whose beautiful foliage and fruit had been turned to brown or soggy mush. Experts told us that we should wait to see what would happen.

That suited me just fine. I had no energy to root up a lot of plants, either at the parsonage or at the church. And the trauma of that freeze in my own mind was that I couldn't believe that it could actually kill plants that had withstood so much.

Almost six months later, we are beginning to see what survived and what really is a big pile of soggy mush. There are hedges that have put forth green leaves and come back in force. And there are plants and trees whose branches have never been able to green up again...but whose roots are putting forth new growth.

I'm glad we waited.

I find that aside from my feeling after the events of February that there was simply no energy to deal immediately with all of the plants, that waiting has a certain amount of optimism. The gardener of this parable knows what he must do in the waiting time to make sure that he gives the tree its best chance. The master knows only disappointment and frustration that he has wanted fruit from this tree for three years and has yet to find any. He is ready to let it go.

One might say that the master is the pessimist in this story, though I tend to think of him more as the one who can see what is immediately in front of him and immediately in the past, using that data to figure out his next move. My experience with fig trees in particular is that they seem to produce fruit in season and out of season, as long as the temperatures are in the correct range, so he might just be correct that this tree is never going to deliver. We all need realists around to tell us that no matter how much we long for something to work, we may just need to abandon it.

But we also need optimistic gardeners who tell us that we can be patient and do the things that could help for a little while longer and there might be some life left. The gardener is not wholly without realism though—he too puts a time frame on his optimism and comes up with a plan to work in the meantime. The gardener looks into a hopeful future and dreams of what might be and knows that dreaming isn't enough—he also has to do what he can to help the dream along.

We have both those who have their eyes on the trajectory of the past into the present moment and those whose mind's eye continue from the present moment into a hopeful future. We need each other—to listen to each other and to discern together what the work is that needs to be done. And if it involves a little bit of manure, then so be it.

Where do you find yourself? Do you find yourself in a period of waiting to see what might be or frustrated that it hasn't happened yet? Do you find yourself waiting but without knowing what to do to give the future its best chance? Do you find yourself working hard to prepare for the moment when new life and fruit will come along?

Plans are coming together for activities and moments of discernment and growth at the church, even beyond worship, many of which our year+ of waiting have prepared us for. I pray that you will find a place to rest AND a place to study AND a place to serve AND a place to come together. It is in these places that the kingdom of God in us begins putting out buds of fruit.

# July Newsletter

## ***Finding Peace in an Anxious World***

Pastor Allison will be leading us in this study on Tuesday mornings at 10:00am in the parlor (June 29-July 27). We have extra books available, and we plan to potentially offer a second round of this study in the fall at a different time of day.



## **Coming this Fall!**

As a follow-up to the work we will have done with *Finding Peace in an Anxious World*, there are early-stage plans to have a conversation around ***Walking with Nehemiah: Your Community Is Your Congregation.***

The author, Rev. Dr. Joe Daniels, Jr., who was our Rio Texas Annual Conference speaker this year, serves a congregation in the Washington DC area which grew from a small 1/2 time appointment to one of the larger congregations in Washington DC by engaging with their surrounding community. In *Walking with Nehemiah*, he lays out principles and a process for congregations to do the same in their own contexts.



The aim with this conversation will be to come up with actual plans for our congregation to implement to

