

# The Newsletter

## Memorial United Methodist Church

6100 Berkman Drive Austin TX 78723

Rev. Cynthia Kepler-Karrer - Pastor

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

Find all our Newsletters on our

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# March 2021



embodied  
MIND • BODY • HEART • SOUL

As we seek to navigate this world where blended worship doesn’t just refer to the styles within worship but worship that crosses from in-person experiences to at-home and digital mediums, we want to be aware of how we engage wholly with God through mind—body—heart—soul.

Though we missed Ash Wednesday services due to the ice and snow, Lent has begun. At our February 7 service, we passed out at-home activity bags which contained ashes, burlap, a pot to plant seeds, a prayer poster, a devotional booklet and a companion “Lent coloring calendar” as well as some notecards to encourage people to reach out. If you would like to have one of these kits, please let us know—we still have several that we can get to folks.

As we journey through Lent together, we want people to pay attention to how they experience God and to see if they can make connections between the mind—body—heart---soul. We hope that by Easter we will be moving closer to being able to safely be in each other’s presence.

To that end, we are asking questions about our experience over the last year—what, if anything, has been engaging about the ways in which we have worshiped (streaming, through email delivery of materials and snail mail materials)? After we return to having in-person worship and small group meetings, how can we continue to offer ways to engage to people who cannot be present “in the room”?

What will it mean to worship in a space where people will be present both physically and digitally? How can we engage *everyone* with the Good News of Jesus Christ?

If you are interested in helping us work on solutions to these questions, we would love to have your thoughts and hopes. Please communicate with us in the office by phone message or by email—or by sending us a note!

## Youth News: Innovation Lab = Cooking Club



Daphne was selected for the Innovation Lab Team and received a grant from the Center for Youth Ministry Training (CYMT) for up to 1,200 dollars. She put together a team from the congregation at Memorial UMC. The team consisted of KiKI, Kendall, Kathleen, Cesar, and participation from the youth including Kamika, Holly, Lucas, and Zachary.



This team met for at least 6 months to come up with innovative ideas to meet the needs and concerns of the youth in our Windsor Park Community here in Austin. Our goal was to create community and connectedness and rid them of loneliness that was amplified due to the pandemic. The idea that we were able to test was a pilot cooking club. We used the grant money to purchase food and supplies for the youth and their families to box up and send home with them.

We were able to host the cooking club over zoom. It was an instant successful event in which it was a breath of fresh air for all the participants and even their families. It not only allowed for connectedness and equipping them with new cooking skills, but it allowed us to show the love of Christ by meeting multiple needs of the people. That is because some students are having food disparities because they depended on school breakfast and lunch. We were able to connect with families we had never connected with before and connect with other youth of the congregation such as Alex Garcia.

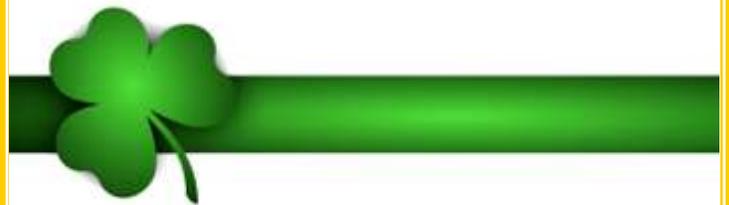
The participants really enjoyed it and are excited about future cooking club events. We believe that this could be a sustainable endeavor that could go hand in hand with the church's outreach ministry of Wesley Recreation.

Thank you to all the team members, participants, and those who have been praying for the success of the testing of this idea.



## March Birthdays

- 1st Craig Amundson  
Joel Britt
- 2nd Travis Rychlik
- 3rd Elizabeth Bach-Miller
- 4th Eva Davila
- 5th Linda Eaker  
James Journigan
- 6th Carole Garner  
Judy Johnson
- 7th David Amundson  
Chad Ericson
- 8th Mary Bryant
- 9th Laura Elizabeth Smith  
Grant Walker Zapalac
- 12th Wanda Anderson  
Minda Egbert
- 15th Jacy Kuruk Gray  
Danielle Webster
- 16th Alberta Shelton
- 17th Elizabeth Aeon Petersen
- 19th Julian Dahan  
Josh Jourdan
- 23rd Dorothy Langston
- 24th Courtney Garner
- 25th Jonathan Mohler  
Jack Dahan
- 26th Misty Ericson
- 30th Patrick Tafoya
- 31st Deborah Bryant





# The Pastor's Corner

*Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."*



A few weeks ago, I was driving up Cameron road and at the corner of Cameron and 290, a guy was in the median, holding up a large sign on a pole. His sign read in large block letters, "THE END OF THE WORLD IS NEAR. REPENT!"

I wonder if he would have a few more people wanting to listen to him now.

I admit that I've never understood folks who get out and wave such signs. I wonder what it is that they hope to accomplish—what they would do if someone stopped and asked what "repent" means.

We are in a season where repentance is a main focus. To turn once again away from sin and re-commit to the baptized life of a disciple is an ongoing and constant need for a Christian, but it's good to have a season that reminds us of that.

What I don't get is that the signs don't follow up "REPENT!" with the rest of the statement.

We've all had bad news that we've believed—rumors that fly around, lies that we buy into because they suit our preferred outcomes. But what good is turning around if you don't know what you've turned around in order to see?

I would be willing to bet that every single person in our congregation has a Good News story—a story when they felt loved even though they weren't sure they deserved it or when they understood that they could do the hard work of rejecting sin *because* of God's love. That can take a lot of different forms, and it can be a realization that comes in a lot of different ways.

Some people have an intellectual realization that comes perhaps through reading scripture or in study. Some folks have an intense emotional experience. Some have a moment in the middle of physically moving around. And some have what we might describe as a "vision".

So in this Lenten time, I hope that you are not just examining your own life and actions and discerning where repentance is needed. I hope that you are also identifying your own Good News story. I hope that you are learning how and when to share that to encourage others to understand how Good News works in their own lives.

There is something beyond "REPENT!" Thanks be to God. Amen.

## UPDATE ON RE-ENGAGING



Though we had hoped to have at least two meetings before this newsletter went to print, the Re-Engaging In-Person Ministries group has met once (with two meetings knocked out due to weather).

The topics ranged from how we will determine what amount of community spread of COVID vs. how widespread the vaccine is will allow us to come back to inside in-person activities to what our policies and procedures will be to allow everyone to be as safe as possible. What is clear from our conversations is that even when we come back inside, in-person activities will not look the same as they did even the week before we started isolating. We will still need to maintain

distance and not do things like pass the peace or move around just visiting inside the building. We want to be able to communicate with the congregation what it is that we are working on, so if you are not on our email list and want to receive updates, please let us know.

# March Newsletter

To God's People of Memorial UMC,

As I write this message, I'm looking out upon a scene of icy wonder and really, really cold

weather. This stretch of icy cold will be remembered for some time to come! I'm grateful for a warm home, running water and a well-provisioned cupboard! And I'm relieved that the 2021 Austin CROP Hunger Walk has gone virtual. What is a virtual CROP Hunger Walk? A virtual walk just means that folks are able to decide when and where they will walk: in small teams, as families, or as individuals. One church, this year, plans a scavenger hunt for their Walk activity!

Our Walk date is Sunday, March 7<sup>th</sup>. We anticipate many congregations to focus on that day. But we also know of folks who will walk on Saturday, March 6<sup>th</sup> – or even on the last Sunday in February. And, of course, (please, God, no!) if we have icy, cold weather, each team or family or individual is free to adjust and choose another day.

Why a “virtual” walk? Safety is the first reason. There is no way we want – or could have – 600 people gather at Camp Mabry during a pandemic. The second reason is that *we need to walk*. The Austin Walk supports 5 local groups that are critical in this time and supports the transforming ministry of Church World Service. Please visit [www.crophungerwalk.org/austintx](http://www.crophungerwalk.org/austintx) to learn more and to register and donate.

When we completed last year's ATX Walk, we had no idea that the pandemic's impact would be so powerful and long-lasting. I surely didn't expect to be talking about the pandemic in 2021 as a present reality! And we had no idea how critically impactful Austin's 2020 Walk would be. The \$76,100 raised helped our local partners and CWS to respond to the pandemic's impact: unemployment, illness, social dislocation. Today, there are folks who will see their lives turned upside-down by disaster, unemployment, climate impacts and more. Our steps together in Austin will make a difference in their lives!

Ending Hunger Together, Kevin

(512)755-3124 (My office is closed due to the pandemic.) [kmurphy@cwsglobal.org](mailto:kmurphy@cwsglobal.org)

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Join the CROP Hunger Walk [Facebook page](#) and [Instagram page](#)



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