

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.

Sunday Schedule

Sunday School Worship

Find all our Newsletters on our

Web site: www.memorialumcaustin.com

Find us on Facebook at

Memorial United Methodist Church-Austin

Email:

secretary@memorialumcaustin.com

Phone: 512. 452.5796

Fax: 512.450.0323



In this issue:

Restart.....	1
Youth News & Birthdays.....	2
Pastor's Corner.....	3
Harris Elementary.....	4

September 2020



For instructions about how to worship online see May 2020 Newsletter.

The city of Austin and Travis County announced earlier this week that we had officially moved from Stage 4 COVID restrictions to Stage 3. We rejoice!

And that also means that we are beginning to look again at how we will restart our in-person activities and worship services. Stage 3 still asks those in high risk groups (because of age or other health conditions) to limit gatherings to 10 or fewer people, so I will be hoping that we can be at Stage 2 (or almost there) before we come back for in-person worship, but there are some things we can also do even before that.

I hope to have a distanced service of Holy Communion in the parking lot on either September 6 or September 13. That will involve participants remaining in their cars while I read scripture and the Communion liturgy from a speaker setup. Bags containing the elements will be distributed from under the drive-through area next to the office. As long as we are at Stage 3 or lower, I hope to make this a monthly occurrence.

It is likely that some of our Sunday School classes may want to consider meeting again as we approach Stage 2. I will be reaching out to make sure the plans are in conjunction with best practices as well as local guidance on distancing and mask wearing.

When we come back into the sanctuary, we will also still be doing live streaming through Facebook as well as sending out worship and links to music through email and sending physical copies to those with less internet access. I am following the guidance of the major music organizations in the country, which are working on studies to determine how much singing affects the spread of COVID. As of right now, the choir will not be singing together live, and it is unlikely that the in-person service will include congregational singing.

Thank you for your patience as we figure out the best witness to our confidence in God as well as our deep desire not to do harm to one another! Hope is with us!



Youth News!

Our youth director, Daphne Turnage, and the youth program at Memorial UMC have been selected to be a part of a special Innovation Lab through the Center for Youth Ministry Training. Along with our participation in the program, we will be given a small grant to help realize one of the ministries that we dream up!

The Innovation Lab has been a part of the Center for Youth since 2017, seeking not just to do small tweaks to the basic models of youth ministry that have been around for a long time, but to figure out where our basic assumptions about youth ministry need to shift and change in order to lead us to new expectations and ways of connecting youth with Jesus.

This program has recently invited four youth directors in the CYMT program and their youth programs/churches to participate in a special accelerated Innovation Lab, taking place over 5 months. The goal is to see whether their process can fit into an accelerated timeline because sometimes a process can bog down and lose energy if it is too long. The program will begin September 1, 2020 and go through January 31, 2021.

Daphne has demonstrated over her first year here with us that she is committed to finding new ways to reach the youth in our neighborhood, so we are delighted that her accomplishments have been recognized and honored by her graduate program. Daphne looks forward to working with members of the congregation as well as youth and their parents to dream into God's future here at Memorial.

*Congratulations on your
Marriage!*

*Daniel Swayze
and Anna
Westbrook*



September Birthdays

- 1st Geoffery Adams
Bob Johnson
John Alan Nixon
- 3rd Sandra Amundson
Nathaniel Rodriguez
Hannah Smith
- 4th Hildegarde Kothman
- 7th Charles Waits
- 8th Jason Ramos
- 9th Billy Ray Capps
- 10th Bea Bailey
Kenneth Jourdan
- 11th Kevin McFarland
- 12th Priscilla Bissett
Kristin Shelton
Taylor Elaine Stewart
- 17th Linda Arbuckle
- 19th Pat Teaney
- 21st Afton Phoenix Petersen
- 22nd Diana Valastro
- 23rd Isabel Shelton
Irene Wright
- 24th Jason Petersen
- 25th Cameron Rodgers
Irene Shelton
- 27th Marsha Fowler





The Pastor's Corner



“No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old cloak, for the patch pulls away from the cloak, and a worse tear is made. Neither is new wine put into old wineskins; otherwise, the skins burst, and the wine is spilled, and the skins are destroyed; but new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved.” (Matthew 9:16-17)

I have written several versions of this article for this newsletter, but as Laura heads toward the Louisiana and East Texas Coast, and we hear the words “unsurvivable storm surge,” I remember the summer of 2006.

I had gotten a call earlier that year to ask if I would be the dean for Kingdom Camp. I had never heard of it—this was before I was at a church that had a significant ministry with special needs adults. Memorial UMC certainly is familiar with it; our Rainbow Girls class has been going just about every year!

Being new to the whole thing, it took me awhile to get a grip on all of the things we needed to do to make the camp a success. The organization of such a camp is much more extensive—the space required to make sure that each camper can move about and the medicine schedule and the activities schedule and the number of staff per camper—it was quite a feat to get it all moving because we had had several long term volunteers end their service the year before.

But we managed to get it put together, found our second nurse, and four days before Labor Day weekend began, I felt confident.

That was when I got a phone call from the assistant to the bishop that Mount Wesley needed to accommodate 25 Katrina evacuees and we would need to shift everything around. He apologized about the late notice, but he was firm that this was what needed to happen.

I admit that I panicked. I got out my charts and pushed beds together and told the volunteers that they would need to bring cots to set up in the bedrooms. We moved our activities around so that we wouldn't disturb the other guests. We planned some different activities as well, including purchasing all the supplies to fill UMCOR hygiene kits.

And there were *still* some mishaps and miscommunications. But we made it through the weekend. The campers had a great time feeling helpful in putting together the kits, and we included both the evacuees and the survivors of the storm in every prayer time.

Certainly in this pandemic, we have all learned what it means to improvise. The gospels speak of it differently: new wineskins, they say, must always be on hand for new wine. But how do you know when you're going to have new wine?

To which I'm positive the answer always is: assume you're going to have new wine.

If I as a Christian always assume that circumstances in the world are not going to change and require me to wrestle with what to do now, then I have a naïve expectation of the world. But if I'm always ready to think about how to construct a new wineskin, while making sure that the old ones are still properly stored, then I am prepared when the vineyard owner come to me with a new vintage that needs to be poured into something so that it can age.

We have all learned together over the past months, and I am sure we will keep on learning. Some things I've tried haven't worked at all. Some have been really successful.

When Laura comes, we will also put aside some of our work in order to help out there, as we did for Katrina and Harvey and Hanna this summer. There is a call that is greater than the plans we have made, and that is the call to be ready to offer the hope and healing we have found in Jesus.

September Newsletter

Just before this newsletter went to press, Pastor Cynthia received a preliminary email from Harris Elementary saying that the school would be reaching out to us for some supplies that they will be missing for the kids. We will continue to let you know how you can participate in this ministry, which will absolutely be different this year.



HARRIS
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
AUSTIN Independent School District

Right now, teachers are busy working on plans for remote instruction, and AISD is getting technology into the hands of kids who don't have individual access (even if a family has a computer, they may not have one for each child). School will be starting (at least the first three weeks) online beginning September 8 (the day after Labor Day)

AND—*We are still praying!* My alarm goes off every day at 5:11pm, and I take a full minute to ask God for discernment—both for the teachers and staff and families AND for our congregation and how we can reach out with the love of Christ and in the spirit of John Wesley, who established places of learning throughout England, especially for those who would not have otherwise had access.

Pray for Harris, but also pray for other schools in our neighborhood or that you are connected to. Pray for UT Austin, Huston-Tillotson, ACC, St. Edwards, Concordia, Texas State, and A&M (or your own alma mater!).

Memorial United Methodist Church
6100 Berkman Drive
Austin, Texas 78723
Phone: 512-452-5796
Fax: 512-450-0323
Web site: www.memorialumcaustin.com

