



# St. John's UMC

## *focus*

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | MARCH 2018 – VOLUME 3

## Nothing Like a Beautiful Landscape Lawn!

by Christine Studebaker & Johnnie Kovar

Last year we spent a total of \$ 9,647 in grounds & pest control for all properties. \$1,439 was spent on repairing sprinklers and irrigation lines across the properties. Sprinkler heads often get broken off and at times there are busted pipes that result in extensive repairs.

We spent \$1,643 in other services such as shrub trimming and limb trimming. Bill Long volunteered one week in the fall of 2017 and did the trimming of shrubbery around all of the properties. He did this all by himself and it took about 20 to 24 hours of his week, but what an amazing gift of service that St. John's received. The campus looks fantastic and he saved us

about \$600. Anyone who feels that this is their gift or passion to help with grounds keeping please contact Johnnie in the office at 512-863-5886 or johnnie@stjohnsumc.cc. She would more than welcome volunteers to help and to save some cost along the way.

We spent \$900 on a dead tree removal at the parsonage. You wouldn't believe the quotes we got from different business. \$900 was a very minimal cost for us, because we were blessed by some great men that labored to help cut the tree up and haul-off. These amazing men were Chuck Russell, Dayne Carlson, Dean May and Gene Lawhon. A huge thank you goes out to them for this undertaking.

## DISTRICT EVENTS

Online courses available at [BeADisciple.com](http://BeADisciple.com) for LSM credit:

3-05-2018	Come to the Waters	\$65.00
3-12-2018	Methodist Identity: Our Beliefs	\$50.00
4-02-2018	Biblical Storytelling I	\$65.00
4-16-2018	Biblical Storytelling II	\$65.00

## Church Events

- Mar 9 - 12 - Spring Break Mission Trip
- Mar 10 - Lifestyle Marriage Workshop
- Mar 11 - UMCOR Sunday
- Mar 18 - Younglings Lemonade & Bake Sale
- Mar 21 - Hospitality/ Evangelism Meeting
- Mar 26 - Single Board Meeting
- Mar 26 - 30 - Holy Week
- Mar 28 - Sager Brown Hygiene Kits Packing Party
- Mar 29 - Maundy Thursday Communion Service
- Mar 30 - Good Friday Service

# Where did you See

## Jesus?

by Darren Walker

It was a simple question, one they asked every week at the close of their time together. "Where did you see Jesus this week?" Whether they were at their regular time and meeting place, or on a mission or ski trip, at the end of the day, they would sit in a circle and ask this question. Everyone was expected to answer, although, no one was forced to answer. Sometimes a person would have two or more things they wanted to share. Other times they might tell the group, "I've got nothing tonight." Most of the time, everyone had something to offer.

What struck me about this practice was the simplicity of this exercise and how deeply it affected the people in the group. It was not a competition. It was a time filled with caring and trust. The people involved were the young people in the youth group of the church I was

servicing. What I did not realize at the time was they were modeling the class meetings that grew the Methodist Church in our earliest days.

Early in our history as Methodists, you had to take part in such a meeting on a regular basis in order to be a Methodist. The church grew and reached countless people. Then we got "successful," "mainstream," and "comfortable." We forgot the importance of focusing on growing disciples and doubled down on signing up members. The end result is that the United Methodist Church is getting smaller. The good news is we can do something about that. One way is to reclaim the class meeting. In the coming year, our church will begin forming small groups of volunteers to take part in class meetings. As the program grows, it will be opened to more and more people. Eventually, it would be great if everyone had this opportunity for growing as a

disciple, even people we have not met yet.

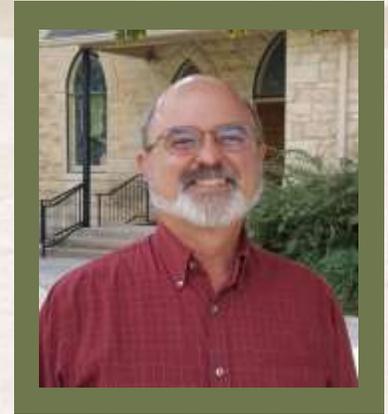
Please pray for our church. Please pray for these small groups. The groups will meet on a regular basis, the when and where determined by the group members. There is no curriculum to buy or study. Instead of learning about spiritual growth, the intent is to actually grow spiritually. The meetings will be about an hour long. This is not in place of Sunday morning classes. I am currently in such a group and personally witness to the importance and impact of this practice. My prayer is that our church will grow in discipleship through this experience so we can experience and share the Good News as effectively as possible.

Grace and Peace,

*Darren Walker*

## Matthew 8:20

(JESUS SAID,) "WHERE TWO OR THREE ARE GATHERED IN MY NAME, THERE AM I IN THE MIDST OF THEM."



# Friends Fund

by Christine Studebaker

**Our mission is to help provide food, increase social well-being, and instill hope for residents in need.**

We would like to let you know that our Food Pantry hours of operation will now be Wednesdays 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Would you please consider volunteering for this mission of St. John's, we need your help in the office!

We accept donations all year long for this fund. We have a standard grocery bag of items that cost approximately \$40. If you are interested in donating items for the pantry please call the office or email Christine for a standard list of items. We will also be offering small grocery bags with "no preparation" foods, please call the office for that standard listing of items.

LOVE GOD. LOVE OTHERS.

## MISSION OUTREACH TO VICTORIA

A Hurricane Harvey Recovery VIM Mission trip to Victoria is planned for March 19 through March 23, 2018. Missioners will be housed at Victoria First United Methodist Church for \$10 per night. If you are interested in this mission trip, please contact Carolyn Henry for more information at [carolyn@stjohnsumc.cc](mailto:carolyn@stjohnsumc.cc).

# "Faithful Spending"

by Carolyn Henry.

We've probably all indulged in what I call "frivolous spending." It's like a little treat for ourselves from time to time that doesn't cost much money. After all, we all deserve a treat from time to time. For me it might be another "fat quarter" of fabric to add to my stash just because I like it, even though I already have drawers and boxes full of enough fabric that I'd have to live to use it all. Or another example – the other day I was at a quilting group (the "Cut ups") meeting and one member had brought along some really cute bracelets that her daughter had made to sell. She'd brought them "just in case" anyone was interested. Oh, I was interested all right. I had my eye on a black one with turquoise accents. And it "only" cost \$35!

Suddenly a thought hit me – that \$35 would pay for 3 health kits for Sager Brown. Then I realized what I needed

to give up for Lent. Pastor Darren has been gently reminding us to decide what we want to give up for Lent for several weeks and so far I'd come up with nothing.

So I'm giving up my habit of "frivolous spending". But for the amount of money I would have spent on some trinket or treat that would make me feel good for a few minutes but would soon be discarded, I want to give to something that will make a difference in our broken world and show the love of Jesus.

It hasn't been that easy – almost every day I'm finding there's something I want but don't really need. But the money I would have spent is adding up fast. And I hope it will make a difference!

Besides, who knows – maybe by the time Easter arrives I will have a new habit. Instead of "frivolous spending" I'm going to call it "faithful spending".

# What is CCYM?

by Michelle Cousineau.

This weekend I had the pleasure of going to Mid-Winter at Glen Lake Camp with our CCYM leaders, Ashley Cousineau, Renee Cousineau, and Devin May. CCYM is the Council Conference of Youth Ministries. This group of kids is responsible for planning an entire weekend retreat for well over 200 kids during two different weekends every year. They plan weekends full of small groups, worship, free time and fellowship.

The small groups consisted of 10-12 kids from different churches led by two CCYM group leaders. The CCYM adults are in charge of being in the background if the group leaders need help. The group leaders led these kids through a series called "I Am." They covered topics about being loved, called, equipped, forgiven, and worthy. The leaders worked with their small groups leading them through a curriculum that the CCYM leaders developed. They led with compassion and empathy. It was an incredible experience to watch our young people lead in this way.

They also designed worship time. They were essential in choosing the band "Bus 7" to lead worship and Joy Dister-Dominguez, Associate Pastor at Arborlawn UMC, to give the message, all being tied together by the central theme of "I Am." At one point on during Saturday night worship, all of the church swayed together arm-in-arm with many kids and adults crying and loving each other. The Holy Spirit was very present in the room with us.

This is an organization run by our youth for our youth to grow spiritually and learn about God's word and God's love for them. While there are always adults present, they are in charge of sitting back, watching our youth become leaders, and enjoying the sight of God working through these beautiful children of God.



Saturday night worship during CCYM Mid-Winter Retreat. Picture taken by Claire Condrey.

# Why Youth Ministry?

by Andrew Taylor

I've been in and around youth ministry my entire life. My mother worked in youth ministry through most of my childhood, which meant that I spent a lot of time at youth gatherings and on youth trips. My mom's youth were some of the first people to hold me as a baby. My earliest memories are of playing on the church playground or in a corner while my parents led youth group meetings. When I was finally old enough, nothing excited me more than finally getting to participate as a full member of the youth group.

When I graduated high school and went off to college, I immediately started to look for ways to volunteer with youth groups as an adult helper, and ultimately I answered a call to ministry by becoming a youth director. Youth ministry shaped my life and taught me how to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. At the same time, many of my peers moved away from home and never really returned to active church life.

Over the next few months, we're going to look at a lot of the how's and why's of youth ministry, from youth leadership to games to mission projects, but the core question and purpose behind it all is how do we teach youth to become lifelong disciples of Jesus Christ?

Being a teenager is all about learning to make decisions for yourself, and deciding who you want to be as a person. Our job as the church is to not only teach them how to be disciples, but show them through our own walks how amazing it is to be one.

# Family Ministry

by Kathryn Glover

*Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." Matthew 19:14*

You may ( or may not ) have noticed the posters around the church about becoming involved in the Children's Ministry. These are reminders that there is always a need for adults in all children's programs, and sometimes the rewards are even greater for the adults.

Pastor Darren reminds us every week to pray for the children, and it is hoped that we do. But the children need more than prayers. They need our time, our attention, our knowledge and our guidance. This almost always requires some sacrifices, but aren't our children worth it?

Just as it takes a "village" to raise a child, it takes the congregation of a church to nurture the spiritual growth of its children. There are many ways you can be a part of developing the future of St. John's UMC – just ask Kathryn.

## PRAYER & BLESSINGS CORNER

### New To Our Family



Welcome to the St. John's family! Jimmie McCracken (pictured above) and Bob & Bonnie Elder (pictured below). They all transferred from another United Methodist Church.

Welcome to our family!



### A Prayer Team Note

by Martha Arizpe

Hubby and I recently had the pleasure of a week-long visit with our niece, who is also my god-daughter. Sherece is 4 months older than our son, Nick, and the two of them have always been close. So when Nick had his seizure and subsequent emergency brain surgery in September of 2016, Sherece rushed to be with him.

As Hubby and I were being driven to north Texas from Georgetown, and that car simply was not going fast enough, Nick was taken by ambulance to Baylor Grapevine, and Sherece

met the ambulance there. But we were still enroute - and I was frantic. We finally met up at Baylor Plano, where Nick was transferred by CareFlight, and I could not stop hugging Sherece and thanking her for being with Nick. I will never forget her reply: "Aunt Martha, it's Nick. Where else would I be?" I was acutely aware of God's grace at that moment.

Sherece showed up for Nick, and reminded us that God was also with our boy - for where else would He be? Grateful and humble yet again.

### Victoria Anne Whitfield

We had the joy and pleasure of baptizing this beautiful baby, Victoria Anne Whitfield on Sunday, February 18, 2018 at the 11:00 service. Congratulations to her parents, Shawn & Tiffany Whitfield and the whole family. May her walk with God be blessed.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Saturday, March 10<sup>th</sup>

The St. John's UMW will be hosting a Bergquist/Carlson Circle Meeting at 2:00 PM on Tuesday, March 20, 2018 in the Fellowship Hall. The program will be "The Sacred Space of Prayer" by Sharon Gibson. Our hostess this month is Patsy Blackburn. For more information contact, UMW Co-Presidents, Shirley Channell at skdr50@suddenlink.net or Patty Lee at prlee@suddenlink.net.

### Holy Week Schedule, Mar 25 - Apr 1, 2018

- ◇ **Sunday, March 25th** - Palm Sunday with our Children's Choir at 8:30 AM & 11:00 AM services
- ◇ **Wednesday, March 28th** - Hygiene Kit Assembly for Sager Brown from 5:15 PM -7:00 PM
- ◇ **Thursday, March 29th** - Maundy Thursday Communion Service at 6:30 PM
- ◇ **Friday, March 30th** - Good Friday Service at 6:30 PM
- ◇ **Sunday, April 1st** - Easter Sunrise Service at 6:30 AM in San Gabriel Sunken Garden

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The Wesley Value Meal is held every Wednesday evening from 5:15 PM to 7:00 PM. The menu will be posted each week through e-mail and on the website at <http://www.stjohnsumc.cc/wesley-value-meals>. If your group or committee would like to host a Wesley Value meal, please contact Rejeanna Fraser at [flamingolady64@gmail.com](mailto:flamingolady64@gmail.com)
- April newsletter articles are due to Michelle at [michelle@stjohnsumc.cc](mailto:michelle@stjohnsumc.cc) by Friday, March 16th at 12:00 PM.
- If there is an emergency on the weekend, please contact one of the staff members. Their phone numbers are in the directory for your convenience.
- We have switched back to the attendance pads and prayer/blessing cards for all services. If you have a prayer request/blessing, there are prayer request cards in the pews and in the narthex/Family Life Center. Please fill out the cards and place them in the offering plate or the prayer box at the back of the narthex. Please fill out your name on the attendance pads and pass to the person next to you. Thank you for joining us for worship.