

2022

# NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER

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## SERMON SERIES

### *Stories Jesus Told*

- Sept 11 The Story of What NOT To Do
- Sept 18 Unacceptable Losses
- Sept 25 Great Story... Surprise Ending
- Oct 2 Faith, Yeast, Eating, Living
- Oct 9 The Story of Nagging



### *Enough*

- Oct 16 When Dreams Become Nightmares
- Oct 23 Wisdom and Finance
- Oct 30 Cultivating Contentment
- Nov 6 Defined by Generosity
- Nov 13 \*Guest Pastor\*
- Nov 20 Just the Beginning



### *Promises*

- Nov 27 A Promise for Hope
- Dec 4 Love Promises More
- Dec 11 Joy in the Promise
- Dec 18 Peace-giving Promises
- Dec 25 Promise Realized and Still to Come



**cross  
tracks**  
CHURCH

 A United Methodist Community



## GIVING THANKS FOR THIS COMMUNITY, OUR COMMUNITY, AND GOD'S COMMUNION

*I thank my God for every remembrance of you, always in every one of my prayers for all of you, praying with joy for your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.*

*-Philippians 1:3-5*

This opening piece of Paul's letter to the Philippians has resonated with me since I first met the people of Cross Tracks Church. My introductory meeting was on Zoom (thank you Covid), and even in the little square boxes, it was plain to me that these were people who were invested in both making me feel welcome and in working towards making Cross Tracks Church the Body of Christ that God wants us to be.

Over the past two and half years, this church has become family, co-workers in kingdom work, leaders in ministry and in administrative work. After 10 years of pastoral ministry, I recognize that this level of shared ministry is a gift that not every church experiences. I am grateful for individuals who have taken on huge chunks of ministry! Everything from every detail of making worship (in person AND online) run smoothly, to

completing the construction of two buildings plus Chapel restoration, to an incredible VBS, teaching Sunday School, and making plans for growth.

*“Thank you, Cross Tracks Church, for being an incredible group of people who are intentional about being welcoming, loving, and alive in our community.”*

I also give thanks for our community of Liberty Hill. Although this once small and ultra-connected community has grown at an astronomical rate and struggles with the addition of people who don't understand the old way of life, it is holding on to our desire to be a community of love and mutual support. During the freeze of 2021, we saw people all over our community reaching out to help neighbors with food, water, housing, and major property care. This town rallies around our students, neighbors who lose loved ones, and events that celebrate our unique space and culture.

*“We live in a community that is ripe for Christian love and invitation - may we be a presence that draws all people to God.”*

Above all, I am grateful for God's presence in our church and our community! We know that God is guiding us in our planning, in our preparations, and in our efforts. We trust that God is going before us and preparing a place for us to reach out into our community to be the light of Christ. There is nothing we've gone through that God wasn't present, holding us and speaking words of hope and life. There is nothing that we will go through that God hasn't already seen and prepared us for.

I am grateful for the Holy Spirit who fills each of us and all of us as the Body of Christ.

Through that power, with God's guidance, and the example of Jesus, there is nothing that we can't do.

In this season of Thanksgiving, I give thanks for you,

*Pastor Michele*



# GIVE TO CROSS TRACKS WITH NO COST TO YOU!

with Amazon Smile

*Note that if you sign up and then make your purchases at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) (without the SMILE), there won't be any donation. You must use the [www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com) URL for the donation at no cost to you.*

The holidays are coming, and many of us will be shopping online for gifts. Amazon offers a program called AmazonSmile where you can support your favorite charity every time you shop, at no additional cost. Now would be a GREAT time to sign up so your holiday purchases help Cross Tracks.

By shopping at <https://smile.amazon.com/> Amazon will donate 0.5% of eligible purchases to Cross Tracks Church! At no cost to you! Over the past year, Amazon donated to Cross Tracks Church every quarter. This is with only a handful of members using this program. Imagine the impact if everyone of us used it.

How to sign up for AmazonSmile:

1. Visit [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com)
2. Sign in with the same account you use for Amazon.com
3. On your first visit, you will be prompted to select your charity
4. Type in Cross Tracks, and select our church from the list of search results
5. Start shopping!

Tip: Add a bookmark to make it easier to shop at [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com).

How to change your charitable organization on AmazonSmile:

1. Sign into [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com)
2. Go to Your Account and select the option to Change your Charity. (from your mobile browser, select Change your Charity from the options at the bottom of the page)
3. Search for Cross Tracks, and select our church from the list of search results

Note: You can also hover over the Supporting notice in the navigation at the top of any page, and then select the Change link next to the name of the charity you're currently supporting.

Note that if you sign up and then make your purchases at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) (without the SMILE), there won't be any donation. You must use the [www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com) URL for the donation at no cost to you.



# FINANCE COMMITTEE

2022 saw a lot of wins for Cross Tracks church! Attendance is up, online services are more sophisticated, Christian education has returned, and more requests are being made for use of church facilities by local clubs and residents. Clearly, the trend is positive for your church.

However, 2023 will bring new challenges for Cross Tracks. First of all, we will need to increase services for our invigorated congregation. We cannot continue pandemic level service and expect your church to thrive. However, we will need to do this during an inflationary environment which will hit the church budget hard.

Here is a look at 2022 to date and beyond:

## 2022 Wins

- Parsonage has been acquired with \$0 debt
- Land in front of church acquired courtesy of a donation
- Chapel stained glass serviced and protected courtesy of donations
- New trees around chapel courtesy of donations
- Multi Use building 2 nd floor finish out with handicap access is complete with \$0 debt
- Louine Noble educational building has been fully functional for the entire year with \$0 debt
- Louine Noble Music Art Garden has been completed with \$0 debt with the assistance of an Eagle Scout
- Prayer Garden has been rehabilitated with \$0 debt courtesy of an Eagle Scout
- Church grounds have been maintained at \$0 cost courtesy of church volunteers
- Building maintenance is 40% below budget courtesy of church volunteers

## 2022-23 Challenges

- Apportionment payments are currently 80% our commitment as part of the UMC
- Nine months into the year we are 10% OVER the annual budget for utilities. Utilities will be substantially higher in 2023.
- This is the last year for INTEREST ONLY payments on the ~\$840k Multi-use Facility (MUF) loan. Principal and interest payments start in January 2023.
- Interest rates have increased and the MUF loan is a variable rate loan, adjusted quarterly
- Janitorial services have increased 50% in 2022 and may increase another 10% in 2023
- 2023 budget increase requests of 25-50% for Christian Education, Youth and Worship Service support services
- Trustee (building and land) expenses expected in 2023:
  - Sealing and painting the parking lot
  - Replacing stairs into Myrtle house
  - Plumbing repairs in Myrtle house
  - Tree trimming and stump remediation on church grounds
  - HVAC maintenance and repairs in MUF

- HVAC maintenance and repairs in MUF
- Roofing maintenance on MUF
- Kitchen repairs in MUF (stove, sink fixtures, ice maker)
- Rekeying and access control for MUF

Now is the time to consider your financial commitment to your church and community. Without the solid foundation of your church, community contributions toward hunger, youth in need, Christian education and other non-profit services cannot be performed. Your church is literally the base on which all services rest.

If you aren't already a monthly contributor, please consider becoming one. If you are planning your annual giving, please keep Cross Tracks in mind. While we have made admirable progress, we have a long way to go toward a stable sustainable budget.

~Spencer



Advent is a time of preparing for the coming of Jesus. Now is the time for us to prepare for that preparing! Christmas has become a frantic season; filled with parties, events, and traditions that are wonderful... and frantic and filling our calendars so that we don't have any down time.

I invite you to take some time, before we hit Thanksgiving and begin the mad dash to Christmas morning to prepare for a different kind of Christmas Season - perhaps choosing to prioritize a season of Advent. What rhythms can you and your family incorporate so that this season is filled with preparing for Jesus to come in new ways?

November 27th is the first Sunday of Advent. Perhaps you could begin each week with family Advent Wreath time. Pastor Michele has a devotion booklet you could use if you don't already have one.

Perhaps you could choose one act of kindness for each week and spend time each day working on it. Or it may be as simple as setting aside time each day to pray and meditate on the theme for each week: hope, peace, joy, love.

May this season of Advent prepare you for the coming of Jesus.



# CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



Teresa - ChristianEducation.CTC@gmail.com

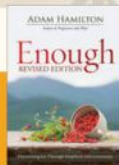
**UM ARMY** Save the date June 11-17, 2023

UM ARMY is an opportunity for youth and adults to experience Christian growth through mission, worship, and fellowship.

For youth having completed 6th -12th grade May 2023, and adults. There will be fundraisers to assist in covering the cost



## ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL



F.R.O.G. Class and L.I.F.E. Class are studying the Enough series by Adam Hamilton. Enough is an invitation to rediscover the Bible's wisdom when it comes to prudent financial practices. In this study one finds the keys to experiencing contentment, overcoming fear, and discovering joy through simplicity and generosity.

## YOUTH SUNDAY SCHOOL



Youth Sunday School (Grades 6-12) continues with their weekly studies from "The Thread: Discovering the Thread of the Gospel Through the Big-Picture Story of the Bible". This Bible study curriculum teaches students God's story and how He wove His thread of love through every page of it.

## CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL

Children ages 4 years old through 5 th grade are really enjoying the Cokesbury curriculum called "Grow, Proclaim Serve". They have been studying from Exodus about Moses, Aaron and the Hebrew people. We start off each week in the chapel with a little wake up tune, watch a short video from the week's lesson and then share our joys and concerns. The students then go to small groups. The 4-year-old thru 1 st grade students then have small group in the Education building and the 2 nd through 5 th grades are in room 21.



# SONSHINE FRIENDS

Teaches Generosity by Giving and Receiving  
Halloween Candy in Harvest Town



# World Communion Sunday

On October 2, we celebrated World Communion Sunday. We learned that all over the world people are coming together to share communion. In each community, they have the bread they normally eat in their culture. During the children's sermon, Pastor Michele showed us samples of bread from all over the world - France, Italy, Mexico, India, even countries in the Middle East and Mediterranean. The children got to choose which bread they wanted to sample; they chose the French bread.

Pastor Michele taught us that when we eat the bread and drink the juice, we are



reminded that Jesus loves us and is a part of us, and that when we go out into the world we take Jesus with us. We are part of the world of people who love God and do His work in the world. We even heard that some of the children are ambitious and want to take communion to outer space.



## CHARGE CONFERENCE

Hi Friends!

I invite you to attend the 2022 Charge Conference with me. What's a Charge Conference, you ask? It's the annual district-wide gathering where we as a group approve the administrative paperwork that represents our hope, dreams, and commitment to God's calling for Cross Tracks Church.

Come meet the District Superintendent, and fellowship with other UMC church members in the Capital District. All church leaders are strongly recommended to attend, and I welcome anyone else who wants to join us.

**Nov. 20th at 3:00**

**Northwest Hills UMC  
7050 Village Center Dr  
Austin, TX 78731**

Let's meet at Cross Tracks at 2:00 PM to carpool and caravan (we'll leave at 2:15).

I hope to see you there!

Blessings,

Susye Bowles  
Church Board Chair



# Grandies for Christ

Connect with the Young-at-Heart (those 50+) Wednesdays at 10:00 am. Meet us at Cross Tracks Church, 101 Church Street in Liberty Hill.

As part of their ministry, Grandies sign and send greeting cards with inspirational messages. In the summer, Grandies also work to make available snack packs for children who may not otherwise have enough food when school isn't in session. They continue their support of the schools throughout the year.

We also support the work of Operation Liberty Hill with a once a month food pantry drive. Collections happen on the first Sunday of the month!

We are NOT all work and no play! The after-meeting games allow us more time to socialize.

Come see what we are all about, Wednesdays at 10:00 am!



# Trunk or Treat



We had a great turnout at our Trunk or Treat event Saturday, 10/29! Thank you to everyone who pitched in to make it a blast!



# Trunk or Treat



# WAYS TO HELP

## United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)

When communities suffer from natural or human-caused disasters, they are overwhelmed and often unable to recover on their own. At these times, the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) steps in and provides relief, response, and recovery grants. In addition to immediate disaster response, they provide technical support and training for local partners so they can provide long-term recovery efforts and address ongoing issues caused by these tragic events. This support is critical in giving these communities resilience and a feeling of hopefulness.

Here are some ways that UMCOR has helped in recent years:

- August 2020-September 2021: \$1.8 million grant for victims of hurricanes in Pennsylvania and New Jersey
- March 2021-December 2021: funding for residents of Kentucky, Tennessee, and Alabama after tornadoes
- June 2021-July 2022: grants totaling nearly \$3 million, mold mitigation, construction management, and replacement of household items after flooding in Michigan, Tennessee, and Kentucky
- August 2021: food, shelter, personnel, medical support, and funds to support the people of Haiti after a 7.2-magnitude earthquake
- December 2021: material donations after wildfires in Colorado
- Ongoing support for the people of Ukraine

But UMCOR can't do their work without our help!

Your gift, joined with the gifts of others, makes a significant impact in the lives of individuals and communities. When you give through to UMCOR, 100% of your gift goes to serve others in the way that you choose.

Use the link below to donate to your chosen mission project. Don't forget to use any employer-matching funds available to you to multiply your impact.

<https://advance.umcmmission.org/>

“

BE STRONG IN THE  
LORD AND IN THE  
STRENGTH OF HIS  
POWER.

Ephesians 6:10

# ONLINE FUNDRAISER

WWW.GIFTITFORWARD.COM



## BOY SCOUT TROOP 196

Support our Liberty Hill Boy Scouts through this festive fundraiser, which will help pay for their summer camp! Simply follow the link above and remember the code: **TR196TX001**

**\$8.00 per item** will be donated to the boy scout troop!

## YOU CAN SHOP

Choose gifts on [giftitforward.com](http://giftitforward.com)

Easy shipping to multiple gift recipients - Something for everyone on your list

\* Friends \* Family \* Business Associates \*

## OTHERS CAN SHOP

Spread the word about your fundraiser and share the FUNDRAISING CODE!

Direct supporters to the website

\* Email \* Facebook \* At Work \*

## GIFTS SHIPPED DIRECT

Gifts are shipped directly to the gift recipient from the manufacturer

via: 



**Don't forget the fundraiser code!**

**TR196TX001**

# Community Events

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Estate Sale

If you are donating an item or items for the church to sale, please use the following guidelines.

All items need to be brought to church on Thursday Nov. 3 from 3PM to 7PM or Friday Nov. 4 from 8AM to noon. We will not have extra help to carry in your items so please bring your own helpers.

Items must be clean and in good working order.

Please price all items to sell but remember all prices are negotiable. Everything that is not sold before 4PM on Saturday will be taken to Operation Liberty Hill by 5:30 on Saturday.

Operation Liberty Hill will not take furniture or books so please know you will need to come pick up these items if you have donated.

### Chocolatier

Chocolate Workshop  
November 10, Thursday @ 7:00PM



Hosted by Award Winning Chocolatier, Ms. Boudar, our neighbor. Invite others outside of Cross Tracks Churches to join this workshop (Tickets will go on sale soon.)

## RECURRING EVENTS

Cub Scouts

Boy Scouts

Hwa Sun Martial Arts



# APPRECIATION



Capital District  
Rio Texas Conference  
(512) 444-1983  
Fax: (512) 444-6457  
[www.capitaldistrictumc.org](http://www.capitaldistrictumc.org)

September 26, 2022

The People of Cross Tracks United Methodist Church  
P.O. Box 266  
Liberty Hill, TX 78642

Friends:

Greetings in Christ's name!

I write to express my gratitude to your congregation for your participation in United Methodist connectional giving for 2022. Our records show that you have paid 20.19% of your apportioned amount for the year, as of the end of August. I am deeply grateful for your generosity and hope you will be able to continue your progress as the year moves to an end. Your faithfulness supports impactful ministry throughout the world, including higher education in Africa, leadership and ministry training for young adults, and the infrastructure that allows UMCOR to be so effective in serving people in crisis due to war and natural disaster.

I give thanks to God for your pastor, Michele, and for the vibrant welcome you are offering your community. This is a very challenging time for ministry, and that context grants your giving even more significance than its face value. On behalf of the Rio Texas Conference and the whole connection, thank you! It is a joy to serve with you in the United Methodist Church.

Grace and peace,

Laura Merrill  
District Superintendent

**"THANK YOU" TO DONNA HUFF + TERESA KINGSBURY FOR  
THEIR SUPPORT, KINDNESS AND EFFICIENCY FOR THE CHURCH  
OFFICE AND BIBLE STUDY GROUPS.**

**~ MAUREEN STROUP**



# THINGS WE DO

*Connect with us*

## *Administration*

**Trustees** - mow the grass, care and maintenance of buildings and everything in them, prepare for future growth. Talk to Frank Funk

**Finance** - manage the budget, make financial decisions for ministry and future growth. Talk to Spencer Kendall.

## *Internal Ministries*

**Children's Team** - coordinate ministries (find leadership for Sunday School, VBS, etc.), build and support connections with the preschool, create a spirit-filled space for our children, dream big dreams for our future. Talk to Pam Turner or Courtney Pyle

**Youth Team** - support youth Sunday School, Sunday evening Youth, mission trips, retreats, and more. Talk to Ann & Michael Hartsfield

**Christian Ed** - plan, implement, and support opportunities for adults to grow in wisdom and in faith. They are also invested in creating multi-generational opportunities.

Talk to Teresa Kingsbury

**Congregational Care** - coordinate the Coffee bar on Sunday mornings, provide support and care of our family of faith (provide meals for hospital stays, births, etc., reach out to members who might need extra care). Talk to Cristy Browning

**Grandies** - Our older and wiser members gather each week to send cards, fellowship, and prepare their mission projects. Talk to Ella Williams.

**Worship** - Plan and prepare for all aspects of worship (order of worship, music, children's connection, special services, visual components, etc.). Talk to Angie Nicholson.

## *External Ministries*

**Outreach Team** - Creating opportunities to serve, connect with, and invite the community of Liberty Hill. Talk to Anthony Buck

**Missions Team** - Meeting the physical needs (ramps, home rehab, flood remediation, etc.) of our community and beyond. Talk to Mike McCown.