

# 2023 NOV-JAN NEWSLETTER

## THE LATEST FROM THE CHURCH:

*Letter From the Pastor - 2*  
*Church Campout - 3*  
*Christian Education - 4-5*  
*Children's Ministries - 6*  
*Ambience Upgrades - 7*  
*Cross Tracks Choir - 8*  
*Committees - 9-11*  
*Finance - 9*  
*Worship - 9*  
*Congregational Care - 10*  
*Trustees - 10*  
*Outreach - 11*  
*Linus - 11*  
*Ladies Lunch - 11*  
*Education Building - 11*  
*Connect with Us - 12*

## SERMON SERIES COMING UP

### *November - Psalms and Songs of Thanksgiving*

11/12 will be a special Sunday of music. Join us as we sing all of our favorites - both hymns and praise music. The following two weeks will be grounded in psalms of thanksgiving.



### *December - Advent Conspiracy*

See Michele's column for all the details!



### *January - Three Gifts We Bring*

This short series will focus on the magi visiting Jesus and we will look closely at three gifts represented in their offerings. We'll also reflect on how Jesus offers the same gifts to us.



## PASTOR'S BIBLE STUDY

It's never too late to join the Pastor's Bible Study - and you don't have to show up every week. Join us any/every Wednesday evening from 7:00-8:00. We begin with Sunday's scripture and Points to Ponder and then take the conversation wherever we want/need to go. The conversation is lively, all questions are respected and we even discover new ways of looking at familiar scriptures!

cross  
tracks  
CHURCH

 A United Methodist Community

# HOLIDAYS AND HOLY DAYS

**Holiday** (HOL-i-dey) 1. a day fixed by law or custom on which ordinary business is suspended in commemoration of some event or in honor of some person  
2. any day of exemption from work (distinguished from working day)

We are moving to a quarterly newsletter because compiling and publishing a newsletter is exhausting! There are certain seasons that NEED a newsletter: holiday, Easter, summer, Back to School. We are very quickly approaching the holiday season! (Some would say Halloween is in the holiday season, so we're sneaking it in.)

I have to admit that my joy and anticipation of the holiday season is accompanied by a small amount of dread. I know that the next few months will be crammed with decorating, shopping, cooking/eating, gatherings, and special events. Each and every one of these things is wonderful and joyful on their own, but in their totality, it can sometimes feel like too much. I've heard people mutter, "I just can't wait for Christmas to be over" and I understand the sentiment, even as my heart hurts for the turn the holy days have taken.

The word holiday came from the term holy days. As you can see from the definition above, holidays have almost nothing to do with holiness any longer. I want to reclaim the holiness of Christmas and make sure there's some holy thrown in with Thanksgiving. I want to go beyond a window decal or t-shirt that says, "Jesus is the reason for the season".

Our Advent series is more than just a sermon series; I hope this becomes a new way of being each of us and for our church! This year, we will focus on changing our approach to, and experience of, the Christmas season. We hope to change it from a holiday to holy days. The Advent Conspiracy is a movement that began over a decade ago between just a few pastors and churches and it has grown to include churches over the US.

There are four tenets to the Advent Conspiracy:



## Worship Fully

In the chaos of Christmas, it is very easy to lose sight of our spiritual practices and perhaps even forego church for Christmas events. The Advent Conspiracy includes simple daily scripture readings to keep us grounded in Christ and worshiping God with all we are.



## Spend Less

In our hearts we know mindless consumption is not the way to celebrate Jesus. But spending less does not mean spending nothing. We are invited to be intentional about how, where, and why we're using our resources.



## Give More

The best gifts celebrate a relationship and most often they require our time and energy. Instead of giving "stuff", we will explore ways of giving more of ourselves.



## Love All

Christmas is a chance to move closer to those in crisis. We will love others as Jesus has loved us. The poor and hurting of our world can be reached by God through the way we choose to celebrate Christmas.

I'm looking forward to how our participation in Advent Conspiracy will empower our giving in a significant way on Christmas Eve.

May all your days be holy,

*Pastor Michele*



Our first family camp out was a great success. About 40 friends joined the fun on Saturday night and more came for an awesome breakfast before church in the prayer garden. Thank you to all the many hands who helped with this event and a special thank you to Kaylyn Funk for the wonderful idea. We are already planning our next camping together event and there will be s'more fun!





# CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



Teresa - ChristianEducation.CTC@gmail.com



**HALLOWEEN TRUNK OR TREAT**

Sunday October 29th, 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM  
Location: Cross Tracks Church parking lot  
101 Church Street, Liberty Hill

The Fire Department, Library and Mayor will be joining in the fun! There also will be a bouncy house!

A FREE community event for the whole family! Please join us. There will be lots of trunks, free hot dogs, nachos, popcorn and lots of candy! A fun, safe night for the whole family.


**Moms Play Date Group!**

**Beginning November 3rd!**

**Fridays, 9-11 AM at Cross Tracks Church in Liberty Hill!**

**Come and enjoy our playroom and outdoor playscape! Kids of all ages welcome!**

**CONFIRMATION**



is for 8th -12th graders.


We are using Credo Curriculum and meet Sunday nights for in-depth study, great questions, great ideas, and learning about serving the church. There are 3 retreats and one took place in September at Gruene UMC.

**YOUTH SUNDAY SCHOOL**



Youth Sunday School (6th-12th grades) have started a study on Grace and Gratitude. This Thanksgiving series helps students appreciate the love and mercy of God at Thanksgiving and throughout the year.

**CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL**



Children ages 4 years old through 5th grade are really enjoying the Cokesbury curriculum called "Grow, Proclaim Serve". This quarter (September through November) they are studying about Hannah, Samuel, David, Elijah, Josiah, and Huldah. We start off each week with chapel which includes 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 group. Currently chapel time and small group are both in the Education building.

**F.R.O.G. CLASS**



The adults, of all ages, in this class have deep in study of the book of Acts since August 6th and plan to finish by December 31, 2023.

## MORE ON CONFIRMATION

Confirmation started off with a fantastic retreat to Gruene UMC and a mission opportunity (cleaning and organizing a very dirty kitchen!)

We gather together every Sunday evening from 5:00-7:00 to eat, study, laugh, and grow in our understanding of scripture, faith, and being part of a church family. You may have noticed our "vine" growing along the wall leading into the worship center where we are currently adding branches each week (see John 15:5). These branches are some of the things that we've learned so far.

Between now and February we will cover: creation, sin, redemption, the Holy Spirit, Church, New Creation, and the way of Discipleship. This section of our curriculum is titled, "Know Your Story" and it's a LOT!

Many thanks to everyone who has and will feed us! We appreciate the care and support from our church family!

We hope you'll join us when we confirm on May 19th during worship!



## THANKSGIVING DINNER FOOD DRIVE

[Pick up your Thanksgiving meal bags after worship or in the entry way!](#)

We will be providing food to families in our community who are in need of a Thanksgiving dinner in conjunction with Operation Liberty Hill. The goal is to feed 200 families. Turkeys have been donated so we are providing the rest of the meal.

Please return your bag(s) by 9:45 AM on Sunday November 12th as we will be praying for the families who will receive them in worship at 10 AM. 200 families is a LOT so take some extra bags, share them with your neighbors, post on your neighborhood's social media sights, ask your dentist, etc. You get the idea!!!! We are not the largest church in Liberty Hill, but we are definitely MIGHTY!

Donations to purchase groceries will also be accepted through Wednesday, November 8th. Be sure to write "Thanksgiving Food Drive" in the memo line of your check. If you have questions, contact Cathi and Russell Stallings at [RussellStallings@hotmail.com](mailto:RussellStallings@hotmail.com).

## ADVENT CONSPIRACY

Children, Youth and Adult Sunday School Classes will all be using the curriculum during December, "The Advent Conspiracy" to go along with the sermon series during the month of December.



## ARMORED SPORTS CAMP

June 17th-20th 20204

Sports Camp  
8AM-12PM

Followed by:  
Dodgeball Camp  
1PM-5PM



Kids registered for both camps would NOT need to be picked up by their parents for the lunch hour (12PM-1PM). They'd just need to be sent to camp with a morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack.

## VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

"Food Truck"

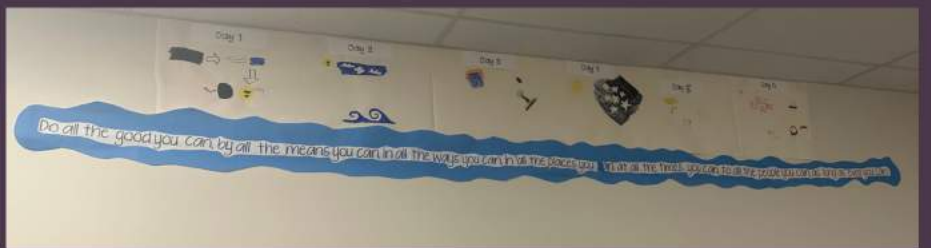
July 14-18, 2024, 5:00-7:30 PM



# AMBIENCE UPGRADES



Narthex



# CHOIR

The Cross Tracks Choir is back on the scene and looking forward to our performance on December 17th at 6:00 pm.

We will be praising God with the Cantata Carols for Christmas. We are welcoming new singers to our group and no it is not too late to be a part of our annual celebration of the birth of Christ.

Come on out to rehearsals Sunday evenings from 5-6:30 pm in the Worship Center.





# CHURCH COMMITTEES

---

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Our fantastic finance team works hard to make "cents" of our financial picture here at Cross Tracks.

While we have a positive cash position and have taken steps during this season to streamline operating costs and plan ahead for the long term, we need support from our most valuable asset - our church body - to continue our upward trajectory.

This fall, we launched our annual season of stewardship, coupled with the "Blessed to Be a Blessing" sermon series. During this season, the best way you can help is to commit to give regularly. Your recurring commitment helps us stay on top of our budget as a church, so we can continue to make a huge impact in our broader community.

---

## **WORSHIP COMMITTEE**

The worship committee is working hard to make our services pleasing to God and to our congregation. If you have any requests, I would be happy to hear them. Send them to me at [angienick1945@gmail.com](mailto:angienick1945@gmail.com) and I will bring them up in our regular meetings.

Here are some of the things we are looking ahead to in the coming weeks—our 5th Sunday Luncheon and Trunk or Treat on Oct. 29th, All Saints Day is Nov. 5th, an Old-fashioned Hymn Sing in our Nov. 12th service, and Advent starts on Dec. 3rd.

You may have noticed a few minor changes in our services and we have had some good feedback on those. Since the Praise Band is doing more songs in the services, we are always looking for more singers and musicians for the band. If you are interested in joining on occasion, let me know. Our choir has just started up and we are looking forward to having them sing for us in the coming weeks. It's not too late to join them.

We also hope to have more of our people helping in the services as liturgists, ushers, greeters, acolytes, helpers with the children's space and nursery. There are positions in the AV room that some might be interested in—operators for the slides, sound board operators, and Facebook presenters. The more people we have means you don't have to do it so often. Let me know if you might be interested in learning more about these positions.

---

## **CONGREGATIONAL CARE TEAM**

As everyone has noticed the great changes to the Narthex and the re-establishment of the Breakfast Bar, the Congregation Care Team (CCT) has developed a new Greeter Program to help visitors be welcomed, provided information, and directed to the activities they wish to participate in.

The kickoff for the Greeters will be the Sunday, 22 nd of October, when you will see our Greeters in green vests in the parking lot and Narthex.

A signup roster, for two Congregate volunteers each Sunday to be Greeters, will be circulated on the 22 nd with the intent everyone helps welcome and support our goal of welcoming our visitors, the community and representing our Church.

A program explanation and instructive guide will be available for those acting as Greeters along with a member of CCT present to help when Greeters arrive at 8:30 on Sunday mornings.

Keep in mind this is an evergreen program which will change with experience and input. We hope you will consider signing up... prayerfully and focused on our outreach in Liberty Hill.

---

## **TRUSTEES AND CHAPEL RESTORATION**

The interior of the Chapel Restoration is in full swing! We have replaced the termite flooring in the wings, and have removed the suspended ceiling to expose the original pressed steel tiles.

We're currently getting bids for HVAC ducting, Electrical and painting. We will have a myriad of details to tend too once these big-ticket items are completed. See Jim Turner if you want to help!

The Trustees have been hard at work creating a welcoming space in the front lobby of the Worship Center. Credit goes to Pam Turner for her creative juices to get this completed. (Pay attention to the photograph on the right side of the shelf!)

The grounds are taken care of by a volunteer mowing crew. If you want to assist with that and take a turn on the tractor, contact Mike Bowles, Frank Funk or Jim Turner to get plugged in – even if it's short term!



## OUTREACH TEAM

Have you thought that our church should be out in the community more?

Do you have ideas for how we can be a haven or beacon for people in the Liberty Hill area?

Would you like to be part of the team that dreams of ideas, gleans brilliance from our church family, or hears the cries of our neighbors? And also part of the team that takes those ideas and creates wonderful opportunities for people to experience the love of God and God's people?

If you've answered yes to any of these, reach out to Pastor Michele.

We're ready to get going!

## *Linus*

Linus at Cross Tracks is stitching away. We have given over 50 book pillows since June at Dell Children's Hospital in Austin. We are busy making quilts and blankets for all children in crisis in Central Texas. All are welcome to join us on the first and third Friday each month from 10-2 in room 24.



## *Ladies Lunch*

All ladies are invited for fellowship, no agenda, get to know each other lunch. Meet us on Friday October 27 at 11 AM at Dahlias 2450 RR 1869 Liberty Hill. Please let Pam or Teresa know if you will be able to join us.

## *Education Building*

The Louine Noble Education Building has been painted, cleaned and is ready for our children. Please ask to see inside any Sunday.



# 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.