March 2018



Cedar Park First United Methodist Church

Connections Newsletter

A Spiritual Oasis Committed to Christ, to Peace, and to Service

Recognizing Church Leaders

Submitted by Steve Howard

On February 18, 2018 Cedar Park First UMC recognized leaders who have completed their service in two important Church positions. Neil Howard was recognized for his service as Church Council Chair and Jim West for his service as our Church liaison to Hill Country Community Ministries (HCCM).



Neil served as the first Church Council Chair,

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Appalachia Service Project 2018

Submitted by Pastor Bonnie How We're heading to Kentucky in June! We are so excited to have 11 missionaries joining us this year! We have had our first safety day and everyone has practiced using power tools, and wearing protective eye glasses, gloves and ear plugs. They've practiced hammering, and measuring. Now all we need to do is continue to pray, pray, pray! We invite you to pray for us too! Pray for us by name!



Elizabeth Talley, Morgan Walker, and Hanna Long

A 9th Grader's Open Letter to Preachers After Florida Shootings

By Abram Cressman Submitted by Bonnie How

Every single weekday, I wake up early, eat breakfast, get on the bus and ride to school. Most days my father wakes up early for work, and everyday as I leave the house I tell him I love him. He tells me he loves me too. It's a simple exchange, but important. It

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JESUS ROCK STAR CORNER

We have had a great month. The younger children have continued their studies of the kings. The older children have been discussing how to show God's love by being a good friend.

We celebrated Valentine's Day by learning a little about St. Valentine. Then we had fun with games.



Leland shoots his ball into the heart.



James is showing use how to slide the heart into the center square.



Addison and Leland are clearing the tables of all the popcorn.



Rachel demonstrates how quickly she could move the marshmallows without hands.

We all had fun and enjoyed our chocolate treats.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

Saturday, April 14th from 6pm to 9pm is **EMPOWER**. This is a night when the children are asked to demonstrate a special talent, which they have been empowered with through God. This can be something they perform but it can also be something they have made or things they have studied and prepared a short report. Please help encourage your child to participate in this demonstration.

Your child is also encouraged to bring a friend. There will be more details to follow.

A Child's Haven Happenings

A Child's Haven

February was a special month celebrating love and friendship, our country and the state of Texas. The kids had a great time at their class Valentine's parties. Our very generous parents provided a special lunch and the children exchanged Valentine

Submitted by Lesley Foyt

cards and played fun Valentine games. They also learned about our country and state flags, our state foods and animals, and the job of a president.

Our Fruit of the Spirit this month was love. John 13:34 says, "As I have loved you, so must you love one another." This month the kids demonstrated love by making special Valentine cards for Sagebrook Nursing Home. In class, the teachers talked about how God loves everyone and wants us to love our family, friends and neighbors. In March our Fruit of the Spirit will be gentleness.

A Child's Haven has begun registration for next school year. If you know of anyone who might be interested in attending, they may contact me at <u>director@childshaven.net</u>. We will be having our spring fundraiser this year on April 21st. Please be on the lookout for more information coming soon! We are looking forward to some beautiful spring weather and learning about insects, dinosaurs and closing out March with our annual Easter Egg Hunt and Field Day.

Endowment Fund Gains Over 16%

Submitted by Neil Howard

Did you know that CPFUMC has an Endowment Fund? Sometime back in 2005 a generous member donated a significant sum of money to start the CPFUMC Endowment Fund. Our Endowment Fund is managed by the Endowment Committee as a responsibility delegated by the Trustees. Grants from the Endowment Fund can be used each year to support CPFUMC ministries and projects. For example in 2015, after many years of no grants, \$10,000 was granted from the Endowment Fund to support the start of our parking lot project. The annual grant limit is "4% of the 3-year rolling average" of the Endowment Fund balance. This currently amounts to a little over \$1600 per year.

At the end of 2017, the CPFUMC Endowment Fund balance was \$44,283.56. The Endowment Fund is invested in the Texas Methodist Foundation's Balanced



Portfolio which is a mix of US and international equities (stocks), bonds and the Methodist Loan Fund, which is used to support local church capital projects. For example, our CPFUMC mortgage is with the Texas Methodist Foundation. During 2017 following the 2016 election, the stock market soared and our Endowment Fund gained over \$6200 for an annual gain of 16.34%. Annual returns like this are not guaranteed, but the TMF Balanced Portfolio is a diversified investment balancing risk and reward.

Lift Up Your Hearts

by Pam Castles, MSN, RN Wesley Nurse at Parker Lane UMC

"Be rooted and built up in him, be established in faith, and overflow with thanksgiving just as you were taught" (Colossians 2: 7)

Gratitude is the essence of a thankful heart. Scripture teaches us to regularly practice the art of thanksgiving. We do this as a community when we gather for Holy Communion and collectively pray the "Great Thanksgiving." But do our individual lives overflow with thanksgiving and gratitude as the verse above from Colossians encourages?

In *The Little Book of Gratitude: Create a Life of Happiness and Wellbeing by Giving Thanks*, Dr. Robert Emmons maintains that the best indicator of healthy relationships and emotional wellbeing is a grateful heart. "Gratitude," he claims, "is not just good medicine ... it is also the truest approach to life ...We did not get to where we are in life by ourselves. Living in gratitude is living in truth."

What does gratitude look like? When other people do something for us that we cannot do ourselves, and we offer affirmation and recognition to those individuals, that is an expression of gratitude. "When we recognize that the source of goodness is *outside* of ourselves, gratitude emerges," says Emmons.

Emmons further states that happiness and wellbeing can be experienced when we take three steps toward gratitude:

- 1. Actively look for the good. To experience joy "our eyes must be wide open in gratitude."
- 2. Receive the good that is offered. This is Grace. "Grace allows us to accept the good, without crippling feelings of indebtedness, embarrassment, or a

sense of inferiority."

3. Give back the good. "Real gratitude creatively seeks opportunities for giving." This is love.

Finally, Dr. Emmons reminds us to never forget that thanksgiving is an action word. When we gather for Holy Communion and hear the words "It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Almighty God, creator of heaven and earth," we should remember not only to see and receive the gifts of God but also to go forth and share these gifts with others.



CPFUMC is charging down the field for Vacation Bible School.

Mark your calendar and plan to join us the week of June 11th through June 15th from 6:00pm to 8:00pm. VBS is open to all children entering elementary school the fall of 2018. This is grades Pre-K to Fifth grade. All children must be toilet trained.

Please complete early registration. You will find the link to the form on the church's website.

VOLUNTEERS are needed to make this year a success. Please contact Pastor Bonnie or Carolyn Smith if you are available.

Trustees Set 2018 Goals

Submitted by Neil Howard

At a meeting on February 5th, the CPFUMC Trustees discussed and set goals for 2018. We came up with 7 goals, one of which has already been completed. We are off to a good start! Here are our goals for 2018:

Complete the MOS Landscaping Project – This project, begun in 2016, was completed in January with the help of members and the Leander HS girls track team. The task now is to keep all of the plants alive and well. Deer repellent spray and deer netting has been applied to a few plants that the deer seem to like. A small electronic deterrent device has also been installed.

Recycle More – We have two rolling green trash bins and one rolling blue recycle bin. All of these are picked up weekly. The green trash bins are usually full, sometimes overflowing. The blue recycle bin is pitifully under-filled. We can do better than this! Our plan is one of education and possibly some additional recycle containers. In the meantime, please think before you throw something in the trash. Plastic bags, Styrofoam cups and any container with food waste cannot be recycled, but almost all paper, plastic, metal and glass items can be recycled. Look for posters and more blue recycle containers in the future.

Complete a Property Inventory – Out insurance costs and coverage is based on an accurate knowledge of the contents and replacement costs of items in our two buildings. We have a start on the property inventory, but it needs to be completed. Any member or friend of the congregation who wishes to help with this task should contact Neil Howard (<u>nhowardtx@gmail.com</u>). This inventory work can be done piecemeal on your own time whenever you are available. Because storage space at the church is at a premium, during this inventory we plan to identify surplus items which we can donate or haul off.

Expedite the Nursery Move – We are planning to move the Nursery from the Multi-Ministries building to the Sanctuary Building youth room. To complete the move we need to purchase and install a toy cabinet and move a few items.

Document Electrical Panels – Whenever we do maintenance work, like replacing a light ballast or replacing an electric outlet or switch, we need to turn off the power to that circuit. Our electric circuit breaker panels have circuit indexes on the inside, but these indexes are incomplete and obsolete. We need to update these electric panel indexes. Two people with cell phones could do this on their own time whenever available. Any member or friend of the congregation who wishes to help with this task should contact Neil Howard (nhowardtx@gmail.com).

Landscape Plan for Park Street Frontage – In order to make our church more appealing from Park Street, we are looking at commissioning a landscaping plan for our remaining Park Street frontage. The extent of the plan and the specifications (plant types, irrigation required) are still TBD. Once the landscape plan is obtained, we can assess how much of the work we can do ourselves and what we will need to hire out. Of course, we will have to figure out how to pay for it as well!

MMB Parking Lot – The Multi-Ministries Building parking lot is heavily used during the week by families dropping off children for our Child's Haven program. There is so much use that parents are parking on the "grassy" areas and reducing them to dirt and mud during rainy times. We cannot expand the parking there because of the right-of-way, so we are looking for a solution to eliminate the unsightly burned out dirt and mud look from Park Street.

Congregation Work Days – We are planning for congregation work days on Saturdays, March 24th and September 29th. We will have a list of activities for friends and members who show up from 9 am until 12 noon those days.

If you are willing to help with any of these goals for 2018 or on either or both of the congregation work days, please contact Neil Howard (<u>nhowardtx@gmail.com</u>), Dan McNichol

(vfrdan86@gmail.com) or Carolyn Smith (carolynsmith2215@gmail.com).

Are you TRUSTed con Confianza?



The Rio Texas Annual Conference is committed to the well-being of every person entrusted to its care as well as those persons entrusted to the care of the districts and local United Methodist Churches throughout our conference borders. Therefore, we will strive to create safe places for all of God's children. Our safety policy and procedures helps us to do this holy and hard work.

STEPS

3 Steps for TRUSTed con Confianza certification

1. Register with Safe Gatherings

- Go to safegatherings.com
- Click on the red Get Started button at the top of the page.
- Fill out the online application
- Safe Gatherings will go to work processing the background check and reaching out to the applicant's designated references.

Tips for filling out your application:

- When filling out the Safe Gathering application- laity should choose their church as their organization
- Alert your references and encourage them to watch for an e-mail from Safe Gatherings. The reference will only take 2-3 minutes of their time.
- Cost: Paid by Cedar Park FUMC and the Rio Texas Conference

2. Complete the Safe Gatherings training course:

This is approximately an hour-long presentation of information on safety guidelines and best practices. Persons will take a test at the end of this training.

3. Attend a <u>TRUSTed con Confianza</u> certification facilitated session:

This is a 2-hour interactive experience that can be taken online via a webinar or in person via a scheduled workshop. We have tentatively scheduled an in person training for Saturday, April 21 @1pm - 3pm. For alternative training dates and times, check out: <u>riotexas.org/safetrainings</u>.

LEADERS cont. from p.1

under the revised Nurture, Outreach and Witness church governance model that the Church adopted as a result of the Learning Team study for church growth. Neil served as Chair from 2015 through 2017. Under his leadership the Church completed the parking lot expansion, Memorial Outdoor Sanctuary and substantially updated our website. Neil is tireless in supporting the Church and can be seen there most days working on some Church project. Neil was recognized for his "devoted service and outstanding leadership" and presented a framed certificate in appreciation.

Jim West served as the Church's liaison to HCCM since 2011 and continued into early 2018. In that role he frequently reminded Church members to make food donations. Each Sunday Jim gathered up our HCCM donations. On Mondays he frequently went to a local store to purchase additional food items from cash donations made to HCCM. He would then proceed to deliver the donated and purchased food to HCCM's location in Leander. Jim was there on Sunday and Monday, faithfully fulfilling his duties, sometimes when he was not feeling one hundred percent. Jim was recognized for his "faithful and selfless service" as HCCM liaison.

At that same service, Steve Howard was commissioned as new Church Council Chair and Morgan Wertman was commissioned as Hill Country Community Ministries liaison. They will serve in those positions through 2018 and may be re-appointed at the Annual



OPEN LETTER cont. from p.1

always has been, but in recent years it's importance has dramatically increased.

As I'm sure you're all very aware, on February 14, 2019, just four days ago as I'm writing this. 17 innocent lives were snuffed out by one man. Those 17 people were at school. Learning, teaching, just going about their day. They had done nothing to bring this upon themselves. That morning they had woken up early, eaten breakfast, gotten on the bus or car, maybe walked to school. They never expected that they weren't coming home. Every single one thought they were going to come home, do homework or grade papers, maybe watch some TV. They still had hopes that day. They still had dreams that day. They still had families, friends, relationships that day. And now all of that is gone because one man walked in with one gun.

And I'm just like them.

I go to school everyday, just like them. I get homework everyday, just like them. I have goals I work towards everyday, just like them. I have friends I talk to everyday, just like them. And when I walk into that school everyday, I might not walk out. I'm just like them.

When this story hit the news, and your Facebook or Twitter feeds lit up with the story, I'm sure many of you saw countless posts of people sending "thoughts and prayers" to the families of the victims. To their girlfriends or boyfriends, to their classmates, teachers, and everyone in between. That night they got down on their knees and prayed for the families to heal. For the victims to be sent up to "God's holy light" and join Him in heavenly glory. And that's it. They spent maybe fifteen minutes, thirty, hoping for things to be alright. Nothing else. They didn't write to their local representatives pleading with them to enact

Book Study to be Held in Lent

Pastor Peter will be leading a Wednesday noon book study during the season of Lent. consecutive Wednesdavs, For seven beginning February 14 and ending March 28, Peter will be exploring Ruth Everhart's *Chasing the Divine in the Holy Land.* The book, a 2016 UMW Reading Program selection, recounts Ruth's experiences on an unforgettable pilgrimage to the Holy Land, as one of several ministers taking part in a documentary about pilgrimage. Ruth admits that she had little idea just how demanding - yet ultimately rewarding - her transformation from Presbyterian minister, wife, and mom to pilgrim would be. It's a candid and delightful book, one that will surely serve as a wonderful companion to our Lenten journey.

Each study will meet for one hour, from noon to 1pm, to explore 3 chapters of the book, which can be ordered for \$15. A sign-up sheet for you to indicate your interest in taking part in this study is on the back table in the Sanctuary. Please consider bringing a sack lunch and joining us for this series.

CHASING THE DIVINE IN THE HOLY LAND



Ruth Everhart



Taoist Tai Chi Society of the USA

Introduction to (First 17 Moves): Thursdays 9:30-22am Join any time Weekly Beginner Class: Thursdays from 11am-12:30pm Stop by before or after class andvisit with Edna or Debe. Edna: ednmed@yahoo.com Debe: debemc@hotmail.com



OPEN LETTER cont. from p.7

more laws on gun control or mental illness or whatever issue they think caused this atrocity. They didn't do anything. As if those "thoughts and prayers" would stop the bullets next time. Bring those 17 dead people back. Make everything alright. And that unacceptable. is I have to say, I've never been one much for religion. There's so much darkness and hate in the world. How could there possibly be some divine entity watching over it all, letting it all happen? Never stepping in to say, "Hey everyone, I'm here. Maybe you shouldn't do that stuff?" Sitting up on their throne, gazing down at our screwed up world, claiming to be a force of all-powerful good yet letting all this evil continue. I'm sure some of your congregation might be feeling the same way as I am. Are their thoughts and prayers doing anything? Is my God hearing me? Why won't he stop this evil?

Which brings us here. The Call to Action, I suppose. In this time of darkness, when those who are faithful look deep into themselves and question if their thoughts and prayers matter, I bring to you this quote, and I encourage you to share it with your congregation. Unfortunately I don't know who said it and can't give them proper credit, but I hope their words will inspire others to do something. "Pray like God is always listening, but act as if you are the only one who can do something about it." Thoughts and prayers mean nothing if not followed by action. If you, like so many others, sit down for half an hour and pray to God to help these people, then get up and do nothing, trusting in your God to take care of it for you, you are not helping. If you really believe that God will do something, then make sure he knows you're doing something too.

So when Sunday comes and you get up in front of all those faithful people, just sending

prayers to God, tell them this. That their prayers won't help if they don't. That if they want God to put in work, they had better do something too. God is all well and good, but he isn't a person. He can't send letters to his local government representatives. He can't donate money to trauma centers both in Florida and around the world. He can't walk down to his courthouse and talk face to face with his mayor, expressing his concerns about what's been happening. But they can. They have the power to save so many others in the future. If they want change, tell them to be that change.

Everyday that I go to school, I risk not coming back. From here there's not a whole lot I can do about that. So I'm reaching out to you. Every single one of you has an avenue to anywhere from one hundred to one thousand people, and with your help we can make this world a better place. A place where children know when they go school, they will come home. A place where the phrase "just another school shooting" isn't an acceptable term. A place where we know our actions payed off.

So I beg you to address your congregation. Let them know that they can be the change they want to see in the world. Let them know that God can't do everything on his own. You can make them care. And that may just be the most powerful tool in the world.

Abram Cressman is the 15 year old son of Reverend Dr. Lisa Cressman, founder and steward of the site, "Backstory Preaching."







Do you need First Aid or CPR training? Please plan to attend the training on Saturday, April 21st from 9:00am to 11:30am. Training is open to all 10 years old or older. This class is also open to the general public.

Following the CPR class will be the Trusted con Confianza training which is required by the Methodist church for anyone over the age of 16 working with children or vulnerable adults.

If interested please contact Bonnie How or Carolyn Smith.

Ridiculous Jokes to Help You Groan Through the Week.

1. What is orange and sounds like a parrot?	
2. What do you call a dog that does magic tricks?	
3. How do you get two whales in a car?	
4. Why did the man fall into the well?	5. Αγε, matey!
5. What did the pirate say when he turned 80 years old?	4. Because he couldn't see that well
6. People in Dubai don't like the Flintstones, but the people in Abu Dhabi do!	3. Start in England and drive west
7. I couldn't figure out why the basketball kept getting larger. Then it hit me.	2. Α Ιαρκαcadabrador

1. A carrot



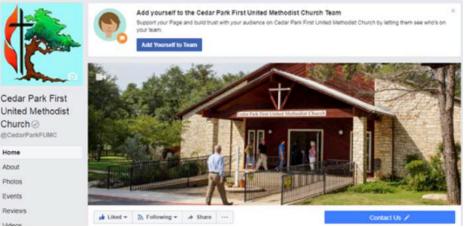
"For 59 years, he brought her flowers. See how he honors her memory now

Andy Carver spreads joy, pays tribute to late wife through weekly bouquet presentation."

Andy Carver was featured in the Lifestyles section of the Austin American Statesman on Valentine's Day. Flowers, devotion, romance and remembrance. If you missed this article, you can go to <u>https://tinyurl.com/y7rhemyv</u> to view it.

facebook

Are you a friend on our Facebook page? We now have 85 followers. Are you one of our followers? If not you will find us in your search as **Cedar Park First United Methodist Church**.



You might find it a bit confusing. "Like", "Follow", "Share" which do you click? We would encourage you to click "**Like**" to start. Posts from Cedar Park First United Methodist Church will then appear on your Facebook Newsfeeds. Once you receive posts feel free to comment. But more importantly, please "**Like**" and "**Share**" our posts. This will give us the largest exposure.

Do you have an event you would like to have posted from the church's page? Please email a picture and details to

Colleen Litaker, colleen.litaker@gmail.com.

CPFUMC March 2018

See full calendar online at https://cpfumc.org/find-an-event/ Mar 2018 (Central Time) Cedar Park First United Methodist Church, CARE Calendar, Child's Haven Events, Choir, CP1UMC Youth, Other Groups. Pumpkin Patch. SCOUTS. United Methodist Men. United Methodist Women

Sun			The Wed		Fri	Sat
	ľ	ŀ	ŀ	5		ŀ
GZ	97	21	28	F	N	m
Midwinter	2pm - ESL - GED @	9:30am - Morning	9:30am - A Matter of	9:30am - Tai Chi	9 a m - ESL/GED @	10am - Conversation
8:30am - Worship	2:30pm - Talley	10am - Bible Study	12pm - Book Study	1 pm - Talley Piano	2pm - Creel	
9:45am - Sunday	6pm - Colby Prop	1:15pm - Talley	1 pm - Easy Line	6:30pm - AA 12 Step	6:30pm - Alcoholics	
10:45am - Worship	7:30pm - Centering	7:30pm - AA Men's	1 pm - Talley Piano			
			6:30pm - Buckles			
4	5	9	7	8	6	10
8:30am - Worship	2pm - ESL - GED @	9:30am - Morning	9:30am - A Matter of	9:30am - Tai Chi	9 a m - ESL/GED @	9am - UMW Meets
9:45am - Sunday	2:30pm - Talley	10am - Bible Study	12pm - Book Study	1 pm - Talley Piano	6:30pm - Alcoholics	
10:45am - Worship	7:30pm - Centering	1:15pm - Talley	1 pm - Easy Line	6:30pm - AA 12 Step		
12pm - Confirmation		3:30pm - Brownie	1 pm - Talley Piano	6:30pm - Buckles		
6pm - Youth @		6:30pm - Cub Scout	6:30pm - Book Club			
		7:30pm - AA Men's	6:30pm - Cub Scout			
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
8:30am - Worship	2pm - ESL - GED @	9:30am - Morning	9:30am - A Matter of	9:30am - Tai Chi	NEWSLETTER Input	
9:45am - Sunday	2:30pm - Talley	10am - Bible Study	12pm - Book Study	1 pm - Talley Piano	9 a m - ESL/GED @	
10:45am - Worship	6:30pm - FINANCE	1:15pm - Talley	1 pm - Easy Line	6:30pm - AA 12 Step	6:30pm - Alcoholics	
12pm - TRUSTEES	7:30pm - Centering	7:30pm - AA Men's	1 pm - Talley Piano			
			6:30pm - Buckles			
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
8:30am - Worship	2pm - ESL - GED @	9:30am - Morning	9:30am - A Matter of	9:30am - Tai Chi	9 a m - ESL/GED @	8 a m - Open Doors @
9:45am - Sunday	2:30pm - Talley	10am - Bible Study	12pm - Book Study	1 pm - Talley Piano	6:30pm - Alcoholics	9 am - Congregation
10:45am - Worship	6:30pm - COUNCIL	11:15am - Mbrship	1 pm - Easy Line	6:30pm - AA 12 Step		
12pm - Confirmation	7:30pm - Centering	1:15pm - Talley	1 pm - Talley Piano			
3:30pm - Worship @		3:30pm - Brownie	6:30pm - Buckles			
6pm - Youth @		6:30pm - Cub Scout	6:30pm - Cub Scout			
		7 pm - Girl Scout				
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
8am - Holy Week						
8:30am - Worship	2pm - ESL - GED @	9:30am - Morning	9:30am - A Matter of	9:30am - Tai Chi	9 a m - ESL/GED @	
9:45am - Sunday	2:30pm - Talley	10am - Bible Study	12pm - Book Study	1 pm - Talley Piano	6:30pm - Alcoholics	
10:45am - Worship	7:30pm - Centering	1:15pm - Talley	1 pm - Easy Line	6:30pm - AA 12 Step	7 pm - Good Friday	
12pm - Confirmation		7:30pm - AA Men's	1 pm - Talley Piano	7pm - Maundy		
6pm - Youth @			6:30pm - Buckles			