



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

December 2019

Cedar Park First United Methodist Church

Connections

Newsletter

UPCOMING CHRISTMAS MISSIONS UNITED METHODIST WOMEN (UMW)

The United Methodist Women and CPFUMC will sponsor Advent awareness and support for two ministries that serve Cedar Park/Leander and surrounding area. These ministries serve women, children, and youth which is the primary focus of the UMW. We hope the entire church community will help support these ministries during this Advent season.



acts of LOVE Early Childhood Education Center is a ministry of ACTS Church in Leander and serves young families and their children in that area. In our community there is no affordable childcare available specifically for young parents who are pregnant or who have had

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How to Put Holy Back into Christmas

Submitted by the
Stewardship Ideas Committee

It was the day after Halloween and a full three weeks before Thanksgiving. I had just come home from shopping and all I had heard throughout the stores were Christmas carols. When I turned on the TV, I was bombarded by garish advertisements that hit me in the face to Buy! ... Buy! ... Buy! all kinds of things for Christmas. All I could think was that the Christmas season has become too commercial.

It wasn't like this when I was growing up. At this rate of change, stores might begin Christmas sales right after Labor Day in the future. This is just wrong. Buy! Buy! Buy! is not the message of Christmas. The real reason

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JESUS' ROCK STAR CORNER

Submitted by Carolyn Smith

Your help is needed. The Jesus Rock Stars are looking and searching everywhere. They have not been able to locate the savior.



The wisdom of the wise man, the love of Mary, nor the shepherd tending his flock have been able to locate the baby.

The stage manager, the guiding star, the seeking of a wise man, nor the sound tech have been able to find the baby.



Your help is needed to help us solve this mystery.
Please join us **Christmas Eve at 5:00 pm** for our production of
“Away from a Manger”, a Christmas “Whodunit”
by Rachel Benjamin and Suzanne Davis.

December YOUTH News

Submitted by Suzette Thorpe Johnson

The Youth have been busy these past few weeks. We had an awesome DRUM Circle to end out October. We practiced listening to and being in conversation with one another. On All Saints Day, we allowed ourselves space to feel sorrow for the losses we have had in our lives and be thankful for those who have loved us. We learned basic first aid and how to use the AED. We worshipped at the Mercy Me concert – joining voices of thousands of Christians singing Amazing Grace. We served at HCCM. The YOUTH sorted through mounds and mounds of clothing articles and served as guides for guests selecting out coats and blankets for the coming winter. They assisted in giving out smiles alongside 258 coats and 71 blankets in just two hours! The other volunteers complimented how hard working and capable each of them had been and asked them to come back. Way to go CPFUMC family!



HOLY LAND TRIP 2021

We have started raising funds for the trip to the Holy Lands.



Together, we have committed to raising \$18,000 in the next 17 months so that money is not a barrier for any YOUTH willing to work. If you have yard work, gardening, minor home repairs, painting or babysitting – please consider hiring our YOUTH group as a fundraiser for the HOLY LAND Trip. Email Pastor Suzette suzette@cpfumc.org

Please share our link for the on-line auction on all your media links. The more people who see the site, the greater chance we have to increase bids and increase funds.

Here's your auction link for inviting participants:

<https://www.32auctions.com/Holylandtrip2021>

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December YOUTH News, continued



ALL are WELCOME to join us on the adventure of a lifetime to the HOLY LANDS. Dates:

March 13-22, 2021 Spring Break.

During the 10 day trip we will travel all over – visiting places of Scripture from Elijah to Christ and beyond. The cost is \$3696 per person/two person per room. This includes breakfast and dinner; all entrance fees, guides, and tipping etc. You will be

responsible for your lunches and any shopping. Information meeting is coming soon TBA.



Youth attended Mercy Me at HEB Center November 16

Calendar for December:

Sun.12/1: lunch and Advent Study; Christmas movie time

Sat. 12/7: Follow the Star experience in Cedar Park. Meet at 5:30pm to get dinner together then head to Good Shepherd Church to experience Christmas story. Details at [FollowTheStar.com](https://www.followthestar.com); bring food items for HCCM.

Sun. 12/8: lunch and Advent Study:

Sat. 12/14: UMW Brunch – YOUTH provide childcare as fundraiser for Holy Land Trip –NEED 2 safe gathering adults to proceed.

Sun. 12/15: lunch and Advent Study; The Point singing Christmas songs; YOUTH Christmas party at Jett and Jozi's with \$5-10 White elephant gift

Fri 12/20 or Sat. 12/21: potential group babysitting fundraising

Sun. 12/22: lunch and Advent Study; help set up set for Christmas Pageant

Tues. 12/24: YOUTH assist with 5pm Christmas worship

Sun. 12/29: No YOUTH Christmas break



A Child's Haven Happenings

By Lesley Foyt, Director

We had many exciting happenings at A Child's Haven in November! The children learned about community helpers during the first of the month. We had visits from a veterinarian, a police officer and the fire department, with their fire truck of course!

Pastor Peter also made a special visit to the Kinder Bridge class to talk about his role and how he helps people in our community. This month we held our annual canned food drive for Hill Country Community Ministries and collected many cans to donate. On the 21st we had our Thanksgiving Lunch with families. This was a special time of fellowship in which we were able to share our many blessings together. We are very thankful for their children!

Our Fruit of the Spirit this month was Faithfulness. Proverbs 3:3 says: "...let love and faithfulness never leave you..." In chapel this month the kids practiced being faithful by making a joyful noise to the lord with musical instruments! Teachers also read bible stories about having faith and how Jesus is always there for us.

In December our Fruit of the Spirit will be Peace. We are looking forward to our Christmas program on the 21st put on by our students. They always do a wonderful job! There will be a reception following where we will celebrate the joy of the season.

Blessings,

Lesley



Jesus Is The Best Gift Ever VBS!

Saturday
December 7th
10:00 am - 2:00 pm
in the sanctuary

Children come and help us travel through time to discover the best gift of all. Our VBS is open to all elementary age children, bring a friend. Register online at cpfume.org.

See you there Carolyn Smith and Amanda Theriot



To make a difference for kids that don't have access to clean water. That's why here at CPFUMC, we have another team assembled to running the **Austin Half or Full Marathon** in **February of 2020!** We started back in September with the training, and we are already in Week 7!!



Last year, with your help, our team raised just shy of **\$10,000 for World Vision!!**

That amounts to clean water for **over 200 people!!** This year, we have a goal to raise \$15,000. We are already **over \$1100 raised!**

For some of you, God may be calling you to take on a challenge of walking or running the race. **It's not too late!** You still have almost 11 weeks to train. **You won't regret it!**

How to say YES:

1. Choose a distance (half marathon or marathon)
2. [CLICK HERE TO JOIN OUR TEAM!](#)
3. Register for the race (you will receive a charity registration link)

Can't do the race this year? Please prayerfully consider sponsoring one of our world changers!!

[CLICK HERE TO SUPPORT OUR TEAM!](#)

Why World Vision?



World Vision is the largest non-governmental provider of clean water in the World. Last year they reached over 4.6 million new people with clean water. In 2018, 86% of World Vision's total operating expenses were used for programs that benefit children, families, and communities in need. [Learn More](#)



**"Lord, let my heart be broken with the things that break the heart of God."
~Bob Pierce, Founder of World Vision**

**You are Invited to the
Women's Advent Brunch at Cedar Park First United Methodist Church**

Saturday, December 14, 2019, 10am-Noon

to share brunch & fellowship

We will be collecting donations of

NEW ITEMS: Pajamas (pants and long-sleeved shirts), socks (long and short), hats, gloves, sweatshirts-
for girls ages 12-19 - all sizes XS-XXXL for

The Refuge

&

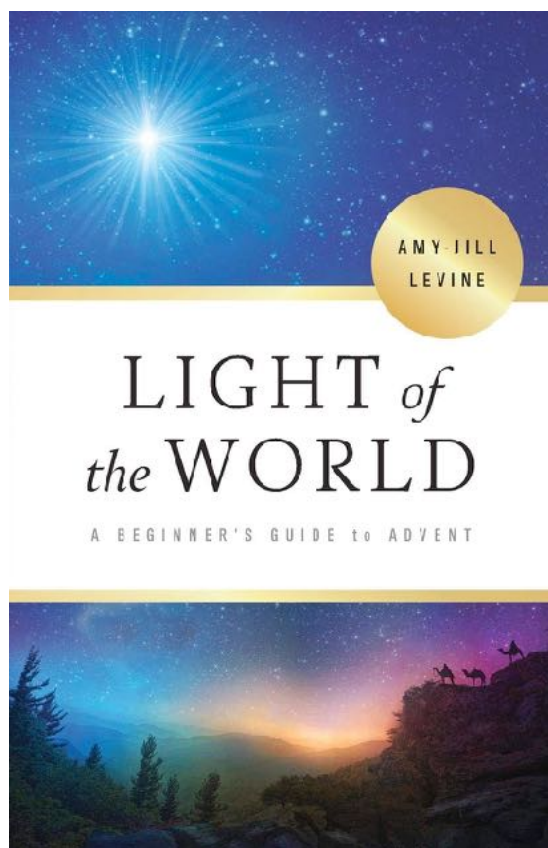
Lysol wipes, "Kleenex" Tissues, baby wipes, Diapers (sizes 1-2), for the babies cared for by

acts Of Love

Monetary Donations are always welcomed ...

This "party" is being sponsored by

The United Methodist Women



**INTERGENERATIONAL BIBLE
STUDY
PLANNED FOR ADVENT**

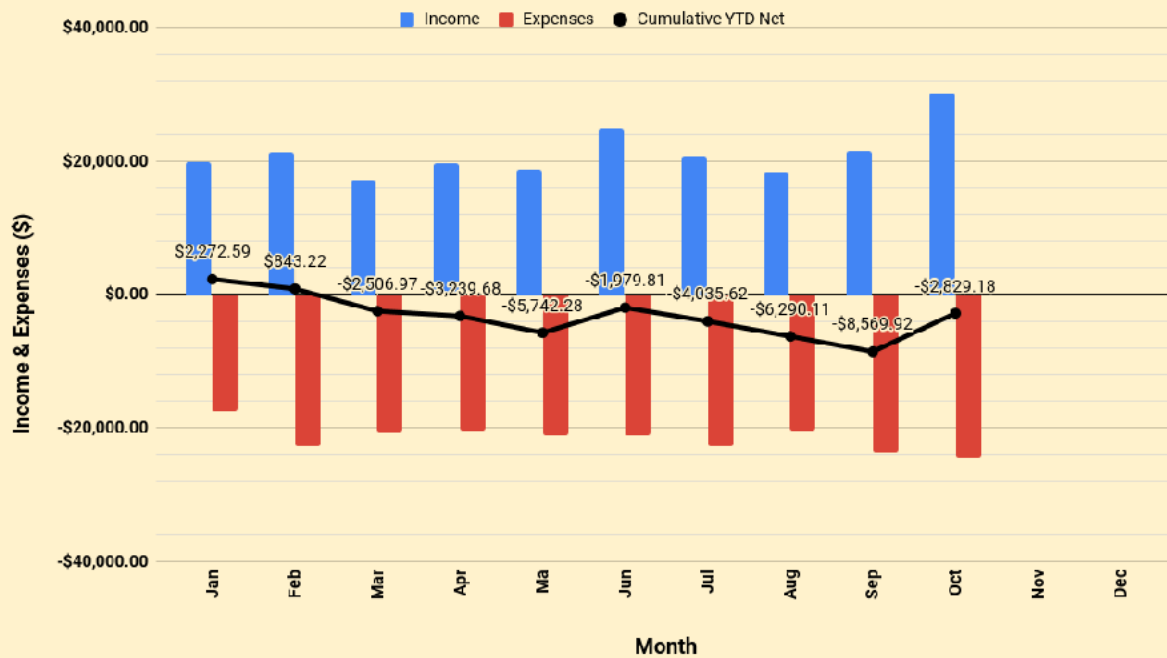
The biblical texts surrounding the story of the birth of Jesus will be the subject of a new study planned for the four Sundays in the season of Advent. Both youth and adults are invited to take part. The classes will be held immediately following the 10:45 worship service, from noon until 2pm, on December 1, 8, 15, and 22. A light lunch will be provided.

Please consider taking part in this study, which will trace the Christmas narrative through the stories of Zechariah and Elizabeth, Mary, the journey to Bethlehem, and the visit from the Magi, utilizing the recent book by Amy-Jill Levine entitled *Light of the World: A Beginner's Guide to Advent*.

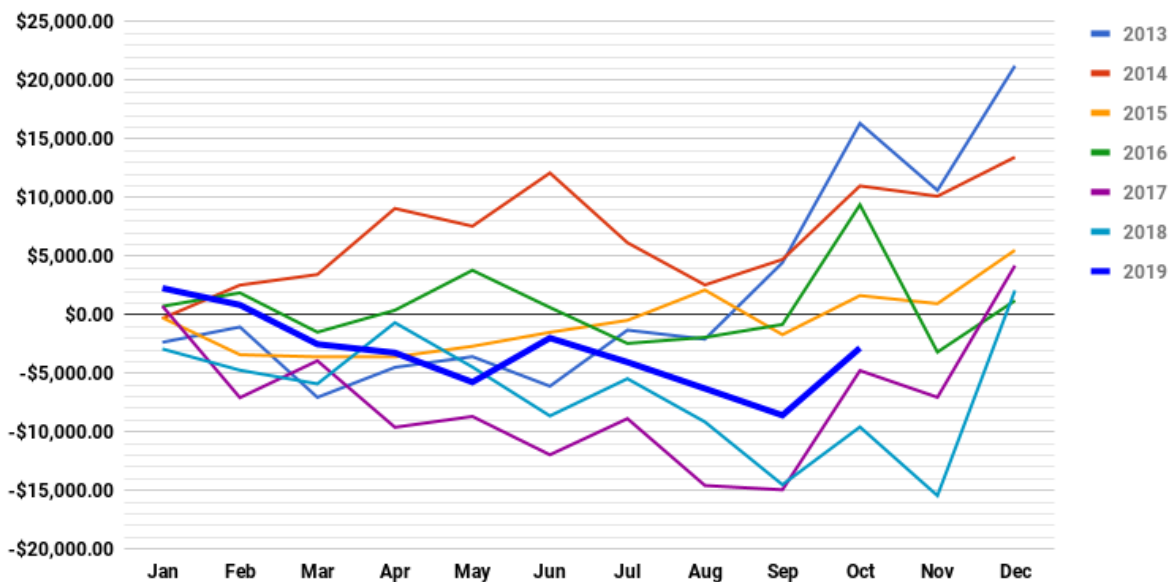
Cedar Park First United Methodist Church Financial Information Through October 2019

Monthly Income, Expenses and Cumulative YTD Net

2019



Cumulative Total YTD Net (2013-2019)



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children during high school or middle school. They provide childcare specifically for these parent(s) who would have dropped out of school due to lack of childcare. **acts of LOVE** wants to see the children grow and learn in a warm and nurturing environment and help young parents continue their education and graduate from high school. By giving these young mothers the opportunity to complete their education, **acts of LOVE** is laying the foundation for their future as mothers, providers, employees, and citizens of their community.



The Refuge for DMST™ (Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking) was launched in November 2013 and is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. **The Refuge** is a 21-building labor of love nestled among the Bastrop County pine trees. **The Refuge** is a long-term, residential, therapeutic community for girls, minors through age 19, who have been rescued out of sex trafficking. Built from the ground up on 50 acres in a beautiful and restorative

setting, **The Refuge** provides trauma-informed, holistic care for the girls on site, including: a University of Texas Charter School program, a medical clinic staffed by community partners and various therapeutic programs uniquely designed for the development of a child survivor. **The Refuge**, with 48 beds, is the largest long-term, live-in rehabilitation facility for child survivors of sex trafficking in the United States. Statistics show that child sex trafficking is the fastest growing crime in the world and that there was an 846% increase in reported child sex trafficking cases from 2010 to 2015 in the United States alone. Learn more about **The Refuge** at: <https://therefugeaustin.org>.

During Advent the following donations will be collected:

Acts of Love could really use **Lysol wipes** and **Kleenex/Puff type tissues** along with **diapers** (newborn #1 or #2) and **baby wipes**. AOL has an Amazon Wish List if you'd prefer to help in that way.

The Refuge needs *NEW* Girls Pajamas (*pants and long-sleeved shirts - all sizes XS-XXXL*), *NEW* socks (*long and short*), **NEW** hats, **NEW** gloves, **NEW** sweatshirts (*S-XXXL with a need for more large sizes*). **Please know that all donated items must be NEW.**

Monetary donations can be put to good use by **BOTH** ministries. Check their websites for more information and needs.

UMW appreciates your continued support in our missions. Please bring your donations to the church during the month of December. Donations boxes will be found in the Narthex.

HOLY, continued from p. 1

for the season is something that Christians should hold dear to their hearts. It is a time for reflection, waiting and awe. This is when God sent His Son to the world as a baby and had Him live His life as a person among us.

Think about how we celebrate this season today. Then reflect on the messages we are sending our children. What active steps can we take to instill in our children the importance of this date and of our beliefs? I asked several people about what they would do to put the Holy back into Christmas. These are some of their suggestions you can share with your families:

If there are small children in your family these are a few suggestions.

1. On the first day of Advent make a loop out of construction paper. Have the children decorate a daily loop and connect them to make a chain. You can put it on a tree or use it to decorate their rooms. Some people put this chain out each year as decoration.
2. Get a small nativity set to have in their rooms. It could be made with cloth or resin. Hobby Lobby is full of small and large sets of the nativity scene. Put the Kings in the east part of the room and make the children move them closer and closer as Epiphany arrives. Wait to put the baby in the manger until Christmas Eve.
3. For older children stringing popcorn for the tree is a delicious way to make a tree decoration.
4. Have the children of all ages put on a play about the nativity. Sheets make wonderful shepherds robes. Preparing for Christmas was a wonderful time in my house.
5. Have the children do a small devotional during Advent, perhaps prompted by an Advent calendar.

For families that have older children, there are many places that welcome your assistance in bringing the Christmas season to families that need help. Maybe the children in your home can help select toys for a toy campaign (fire stations, senior centers are just a couple of the collection points) so they can learn that giving to others makes for a fulsome happy heart. Choosing cans of food for the box in the Narthex which supports the Hill Country Community Ministries. This food not only helps feed other children, but also families. Putting coins in the Salvation Army Kettle or putting gifts of warm socks under Angel Trees are other ways to give to families in need at this time.

For adults, one could read a devotional each day. We have devotional booklets on the back table in the Sanctuary. And when decorating your tree, put on items that have special meaning to the family. Don't forget to tell the story, "you were in Kindergarten when you made this ornament. Your teacher said you were humming a Christmas song the whole time you worked on it." It is these stories that help cement the wonder of the season. Traditions are important.

There will be several services at Church a family could attend together. One that is especially fun is the 5pm Children's Service with the Children's Play. And Christmas Eve is a good time to read the Advent story to the family.

Think how you can apply these steps to your family. I hope this article helps you to find more ways to put the Holy back into Christmas this year.



Come experience the fellowship of Tables for All.

Quotes from participants:

"The food and conversation were wonderful and we had great time! It was such a fun way to get to know people better"Shirley and Richard

"A wonderful way to get to know people"Beverly

"A great time with great people"Laurel

"Wonderful food and wonderful people"Pauline

"So blessed to have such wonderful people in our church"Shirley

Sign up now, contact Carolyn Smith carolynsmit2215@gmail.com.



Follow us on Facebook. Search for **Cedar Park First United Methodist Church** and you can like and share our posts. To have your upcoming events posted on the CPFUMC's Facebook page, please email information to Colleen Litaker, colleen.litaker@gmail.com

Don't forget once your event is over, send your photos and videos to Colleen so she may also post the information.

Find us online at **cpfumc.org**
or call the church Tues-Thurs between 9 and 2
at this phone number:
(512) 335-9540

Want to contact a Church Leader or submit
something for a future Newsletter?



Pastor Peter Castles
Assoc. Pastor/Youth Dir. Suzette Thorpe Johnson
Church Council Chair Steve Howard
Music Director/Pianist Jodi Blount
Children's Haven Director Lesley Foyt
Newsletter Editor Jill Lundstrom

peter@cpfumc.org
suzette@cpfumc.org
showard746@gmail.com
jodi_blount@hotmail.com
director@childshaven.net
lund121@me.com

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Dec 1	2	3	4	5	6	7
YOUTH Holy Lands Auction ON-LINE						
8:30am Worship	12pm Talley Piano	9:30am Morning Prayer Service	1pm Easy Line Dancing	8:30am Tai Chi - Intro	Pastor Suzette's birthday	10am VBS Christmas
9:45am Sunday School	2:15pm ESL - GED	10am Bible Study	3:15pm Talley Piano	10am Tai Chi Beginners	8:30am ESL - GED	5pm YOUTH Christmas
10:45am Worship	6:30pm Webelos mtg	3:15pm Talley Piano	5:15pm GS #40530	3:30pm Talley Piano	6:30pm Alcoholics Anonymous	Night Experience
12pm ADVENT study - youth & adult	7:30pm Centering Prayer	6:30pm Wolves	6:30pm Buckles and Bows Square Dancers	5pm GS #40530		
		7:30pm AA Men's				
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
YOUTH Holy Lands Auction ON-LINE	12pm Talley Piano	9:30am Morning Prayer Service	1pm Easy Line Dancing	8:30am Tai Chi - Intro	8:30am ESL - GED	Peter Castles Birthday
8:30am Worship	2:15pm ESL - GED	10am Bible Study	3:15pm Talley Piano	10am Tai Chi Beginners	6:30pm Alcoholics Anonymous	9:30am P.E.O. "JX"
9:45am Sunday School	7:30pm Centering Prayer	3:15pm Talley Piano	6:30pm Buckles and Bows Square Dancers	3:30pm Talley Piano		10am UMW Advent Br
10:45am Worship		7:30pm AA Men's				
12pm ADVENT study - youth & adult						
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
8:30am Worship	12pm Talley Piano	9:30am Morning Prayer Service	1pm Easy Line Dancing	8:30am Tai Chi - Intro	NEWSLETTER Input Due	
9:45am Sunday School	2:15pm ESL - GED	10am Bible Study	3:15pm Talley Piano	10am Tai Chi Beginners	8:30am ESL - GED	
10:45am Worship	7:30pm Centering Prayer	3:15pm Talley Piano	5:15pm GS #40530	11:30am ACH Christmas Program	6:30pm Alcoholics Anonymous	
12pm ADVENT study - youth & adult		6:30pm Wolves	6:30pm Buckles and Bows Square Dancers	3:30pm Talley Piano		
1:30pm Youth Christmas party		7:30pm AA Men's				
3:30pm Talley Piano Recital		7:30pm BS Pack Mtg				
3:30pm Worship @ The Pointe						
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
8:30am Worship	7:30pm Centering Prayer	5pm Family Christmas Eve Service	CHRISTMAS	8:30am Tai Chi - Intro	6:30pm Alcoholics Anonymous	
9:45am Sunday School		7pm Christmas Eve Service		10am Tai Chi Beginners		
10:45am Worship		7:30pm AA Men's				
12pm ADVENT study - youth & adult						
29	30	31	Jan 1	2	3	4
10am Worship	7:30pm Centering Prayer	9:30am Morning Prayer Service	New Year's Day	8:30am Tai Chi - Intro	6:30pm Alcoholics Anonymous	9am Girl Scout Meet
12pm NO Youth Today		10am Bible Study	1pm Easy Line Dancing	10am Tai Chi Beginners		
		7:30pm AA Men's	5:15pm GS #40530	5pm GS #40530		