



Cedar Park First United Methodist Church

Connections

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

CPFUMC Live Streaming Turns 5

It may seem like only yesterday, but at 10 am Sunday, March 22, 2020, Cedar Park First UMC broadcast our very [first livestream worship service](#). It was the beginning of a lengthy in-person worship outage during the COVID-19 pandemic. That in-person worship outage extended until September 13, 2020 when we began an outdoor 8:30am in-person service suitably masked and “distanced” outside in our Memorial Outdoor Sanctuary. It wasn’t until July 4, 2021 that we began in-person worship again indoor with a single service at 10:45 am, 18 months since the original outage. Full resumption of both our 8:30 am and 10:45 am services had to wait until January 2, 2022, a full 22 months since the COVID-induced outage began.

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A Conversation with Julie and Ronnie Hohle:

Q: When was your first day at CPFUMC and what do you remember about it?

A: I believe it was in 1997 when our girls Lauren and Rachel were 10 and 8.

Q: Tell us about what drew you to CPFUMC.

A: I had visited a much larger church and felt invisible.

Q: In what city did you grow up? Where do you live now?

A: Both Ronnie and I grew up in Houston, TX living just several blocks away from each other.

Q: What church did you come to CPFUMC from?

A: I grew up in the Episcopal church. Ronnie grew up in the Lutheran church.

Q: Tell us about your family.

A: We have two sweet daughters (one Aggie and one Longhorn) and they both each have a son and a daughter. We are very proud of them. Lauren is an RN for the Pflugerville ISD and half way through a program to become a Nurse Practitioner. Rachel is a Speech Pathologist for the Comal School District.

Q: Do you have any pets?

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A Child's Haven Happenings

A Child's Haven had a fun month celebrating love and friendship. Pink was the color of the month, accompanied by the heart, as our shape of the month. Our Valentine's celebrations included a card exchange, balloon dance, treats, and a pizza party! Our fruit of the spirit was Love, and we practiced the verse "We love because He first loved us" 1 John 4:19. Our PreK-3 class had a Jungle unit, and they delighted us with an Elephant Parade around the school.

Teachers attended a training to learn more about Positive Guidance and Using Play as a Medium of Instruction. It was very enriching and we learned some new techniques to continue to provide a safe and loving environment for our children.

Coming up in March:

- Dr. Seuss Week: March 3-6
- Church Read-a-thon: Thursday, March 6th
- Coffee, Community, and Prayer: Thursday, March 13th
- Spring Break: March 17-24
- School Pictures: March 26-27

Yaheli Benitez, Director
A Child's Haven Preschool



BE LIGHT YOUTH - Check it out!

Chili Cook-off and Cobbler Contest a GREAT Success!

Winners are (DRUM ROLL)...

Chili

1st – Once again- Nancy Holmes

2nd – Vicki Thompson

3rd – Russ Lundstrom

Cobbler

1st – Once again- Josie Theriot

2nd – Kinsley Thompson

3rd – Sir Kevin Middleton

Thank you to everyone who cooked, baked and ate their way their way through some fabulous chili. It was truly a wonderful time with our church family.

YOUTH SUNDAY is April 6th

Come support and love on all the youth as they present the teachings from MIDWINTER and share their faith with us.

METHODIST ROOTS: ENGLAND 2025 is almost here. WE NEED YOU TO JOIN US ON THE ADVENTURE OF A LIFETIME!!!

We are traveling with EO tours who specializes in small group tours abroad for both young and more advanced young people. Our group size has shifted due to a variety of issues and where we had scheduled and priced for 14 travelers, we now have 10. We have room just for YOU to join us as we stroll about London, and gawk at St Paul's cathedral where Wesley preached, and shop along the Stafford on Anon, where Shakespeare grew up before heading over to the homestead of the Wesley family near Manchester. We are book-ending our trip with free days in the great city of London where you can chose for yourself which museum or castle or West End play you'd like to experience. We are headed out at the end of May - the exact dates are in flex as a conflict with two of families travel has necessitated a shift; I am awaiting the final dates but they will be within a few days of the ones listed in the link here: <https://www.eo.travelwithus.com/tours/wesley-heritage-tour-with-cedar-park-umc>

PLEASE contact Pastor Suzette if you would be willing to join our Merry Band of Travelers to learn about how not only how God used the Methodist movement to alter the course of history but also enjoy the history and culture of England.

(suzette@cpfumc.org)

BE LIGHT YOUTH SPRING/SUMMER

MARCH

Sun 3/2 Cookie Bake for Spring Fling

3/5 **ASH WEDNESDAY** – joint worship at Leander UMC

Sat 3/8 **MULCH CHURCH** (TBD) Concert at Cedar Park **TOBY MAC**

Sun 3/9 Daylight savings SPRING ahead – no YOUTH

Sun 3/16 First weekend of **Spring break** – no YOUTH

Fri 3/21 – **YOUTH DAY- Mission and Play Day**

Sat 3/22

Sun 3/23

SATURDAY 3/29 **Rally with the Bishop** in Kerrville, TX 9:30-2:PM (need to register ASAP)

Sun 3/30 – Rolling Communion

APRIL

Sat 4/5 “Solea Spring Fling”

Sun 4/6 **YOUTH WORSHIP**

Sun 4/13 Palm Sunday

Thu 4/17 Maundy Thursday worship

Fri 4/18 Good Friday worship

Sun 4/20 **Easter SUNRISE WORSHIP**

Sun 4/27 **CONFIRMATION**

MAY

Sun 5/4

Sun 5/11 – Mother’s Day No YOUTH

Sat 5/17 Schlitterbahn 10-7

Sun 5/18 Graduation Recognition

Sun 5/25

ENGLAND: Methodist Roots May 28- June 4

JUNE

Sun 6/1 NO YOUTH

Sun 6/8

Annual Conference 6/11-14

VBS Sat 6/14 9AM -1PM

Sun 6/15 Father’s Day – No YOUTH

UMARMY MISSION TRIP Sun 6/22 -28

Sun 6/29 NO YOUTH

A: One dog named Luna adopted from a neighbor.

Q: What do you like to do in your spare time? Or what takes up a lot of your time?

A: Ronnie is now retired after almost 40 years in the oilfield industry. His current job is house handyman and groundskeeper. Julie is still working as a legal secretary to patent attorneys.

Q: Do you have a particular hobby? Is there one you want to learn?

A: Ronnie is a runner, dedicated platelet donor and a fun and loving Father and Grandfather. I'm still working and my only hobbies are taking my dog for walks and recently started enjoying reading novels. I absolutely love being a Mom and Grandmother.

Q: What's your favorite restaurant or favorite meal?

A: We currently have two favorites - The League and Jack Allen's, but we also love Lupe Tortilla and the Wildfire (in Georgetown).

Q: Where is your favorite vacation locale?

A: The beach in Destin, Caribbean and Hawaii. We also love Lake Tahoe.

Q: I'd rather do anything besides

A: Julie: clean out stuff to donate. I love to donate, but when I start going through things I get hung up on nostalgia and end up with more of a mess than I started with. Ronnie: being in meetings, on the computer, having a boss (except for Julie of course).

Q: Tell us something we might not know about you!

A: Ronnie and I started dating when I was a Junior in High School and he was in his first year of college.



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Roots

The very first live-streamed worship service was done in the Sanctuary with an iPhone Xs on a camera tripod communicating to the Internet and Facebook via Wi-Fi. Jodi Blount played the piano, Jane Howard ran the slides, Neil Howard ran the camera and Pastors Peter and Suzette led the entire worship service in this makeshift “sound studio” with no studio audience. We had 67 people online for that first live streamed service. Our online record is 78 on August 23, 2020.



At first, we did not know how long the in-person worship outage would last, but as the pandemic months dragged on, we discussed and decided that a live streamed worship service would be good to continue permanently, not only for those members hesitant to return when the pandemic was over, but also for those home-bound members who have a difficult time getting to the church on Sunday.

A month later in April 2020 we began to get more sophisticated with our live streaming system, purchasing a \$295 video switch and setting up a live streaming computer hard-wired to the Internet running the free Open Broadcast Software (OBS). This setup allowed us to generate and broadcast the live stream directly to the Internet, rather than using Neil’s iPhone over Wi-Fi. The additional live streaming equipment was set up on a couple of tables at the rear of the Sanctuary and Sue Sidney created a small “altar” area which was used as the livestream backdrop.



A Real Sound Booth is Created

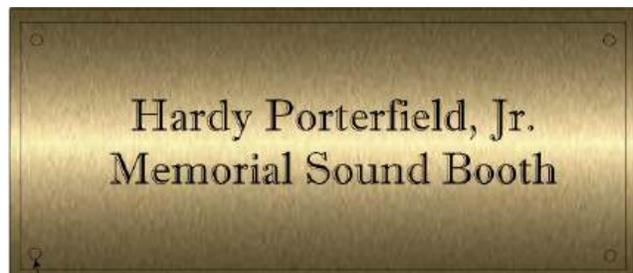
A month later in May of 2020 we got a \$3600 grant from the Endowment Fund to construct a sound booth at the rear of the Sanctuary. This sound booth contained the original slide show

computer plus all of the live streaming equipment we had accumulated since late March. In early May we purchased ¾" red oak veneer plywood panels, some boards, stain and paint at our local Home Depot and Sherwin-Williams stores. We finished preparations through May and June. Final Sound Booth assembly was on June 13, 2020, less than 3 months after our first livestream broadcast!



Those participating in the Sound Booth design, endless testing and adjustments, construction and assembly were Neil Howard, Sergio Longoria, Todd Greer, Hardy Porterfield, Jr., Dean Feazell, Lisa Feazell, Russ Lundstrom, David Longoria and Jane Howard. We have a [live streaming system video tour](#) as it existed on June 1, 2020 available online.

Our video switch appears as a webcam to the OBS software, so creating the live stream was like a sophisticated Zoom meeting. During the pandemic we brought Pastor Suzette’s computer into the Sanctuary and connected it into the live stream so that she could separately “Zoom” directly with the children during the Children’s Sermon part of the worship service. All of the equipment, except the video switch, was available on hand or donated. Hardy Porterfield was instrumental in donating his own video cameras, tripods, camera mounts and microphones to the live streaming effort. Hardy passed away in 2021. We named the Sound Booth after him.



We achieved a milestone on April 25, 2021 when we first live streamed to BOTH our Facebook page and our YouTube channel simultaneously. We had researched and purchased an account with a service named **Restream.io**. This service allows us to simultaneously live stream to as many as 8 different destinations simultaneously. This is called “Multicasting.” It expands our reach to those members who do not have a Facebook account. YouTube does not require an account to view a live stream. You can just go to [our YouTube channel](#) and view. On February 16, 2025 we added [Rumble](#) as a third live stream destination. We had already been uploading recorded worship videos to Rumble since December 2020.

Once the Sound Booth construction was finished, we began gradually upgrading the live streaming equipment year-by-year using member donations to the Technology Fund to pay for the upgrades. We added our first remote-controlled Pan-Tilt-Zoom (PTZ) camera in February 2022 on the south wall near the piano. We had the Sanctuary walls and attic wired for this and potential future upgrades.



Epic Equipment Upgrade

Our second PTZ camera replaced the main video camera during an “epic” live streaming and PA system upgrade effort performed by the entire live streaming team on January 4, 2024. Besides the new main PTZ camera, we added a joystick camera controller which can control up to 8 cameras with scene presets available at the press of a button. We added a new 16-channel audio mixer, two new PA speakers on the left and right front elevated platforms, a separate power amplifier and a second UPS in the equipment rack to help manage the additional loads. It took the whole team several hours to install all the new equipment. We can now power both live streaming cameras remotely and control them via the joystick. The new mixer has multichannel audio recording capability.

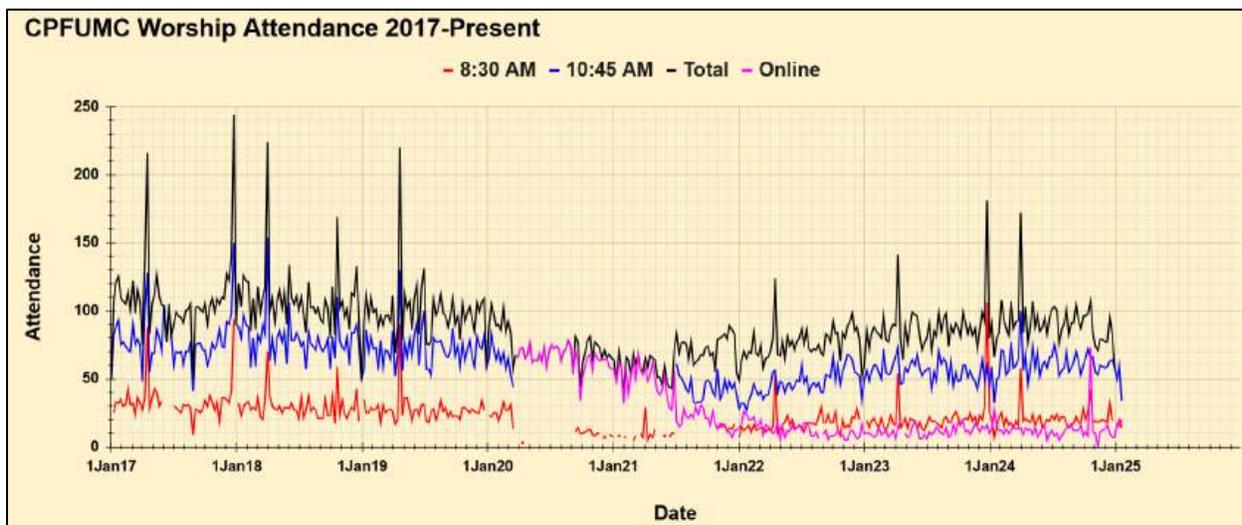


So What?

You may wonder why we made all of this effort and are still continuing it today.

Initially the live streaming effort was made to keep the congregation connected during the COVID pandemic. It was also very energizing for the team to have a project to work on rather than just moping around stuck at home for a year or more during the pandemic. OK, so we also catered to our Inner Nerd! The outcome was that our congregation stayed together through the pandemic when some congregations failed completely. We believe that the dedication of Pastor Peter, Pastor Suzette and Jodi working with our live streaming team helped us bridge the COVID gap. We also found that live streaming provided a continuing worship opportunity for those in our congregation who are homebound. Today, our live stream reaches former CPFUMC members in Phoenix, AZ and viewers as far away as Hamm, Germany. In 2024 approximately one out of every 8 worship attendees participated via the live stream.

Here is the data:



Church Contacts

Find us online at cpfumc.org
or call the church Tues-Thurs between 9 and 2 at (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
Trustees Board Chair Brad Lienhart
Music Director/Pianist Jodi Blount
Newsletter Editor Jill Lundstrom

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Be sure to put "Newsletter" in the subject for Connections submissions!

CPFUMC Calendar March 2025

Click [here](#) to go to the most up to date online calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
23 8:30am - In-Person 9:45am - SS in-person & 10:45am - In-Person 10:45am - Livestream	24 4:30pm - Stephanie Piano 7:30pm - Centering	25 9:30am - Morning Prayer 10am - Bible Study 10am - HCCM 7:30pm - AA Men's Group	26 8:30am - Red Shirts 5:30pm - Stephanie Piano 7:30pm - Big Book Study	27 10am - Sanctuary Prep 4:30pm - Stephanie Piano	28 NEWSLETTER Input Due 8:45am - Men's Coffee 4pm - Stephanie Piano 7:30pm - AA Group @	1 9am - PEO Meeting @
2 8:30am - In-Person 9:45am - SS in-person & 10:45am - In-Person 10:45am - Livestream 12pm - Youth	3 4:30pm - Stephanie Piano 7:30pm - Centering	4 9:30am - Morning Prayer 10am - Bible Study 10am - HCCM 11am - Prayer Shawl 7:30pm - AA Men's Group	5 8:30am - Red Shirts 5:30pm - Stephanie Piano 7:30pm - Big Book Study	6 10am - Sanctuary Prep 4:30pm - Stephanie Piano	7 8:30am - Projector 8:45am - Men's Coffee 4pm - Stephanie Piano 7:30pm - AA Group @	8
9 8:30am - In-Person 9:45am - SS in-person & 10:45am - In-Person 10:45am - Livestream 12pm - Youth	10 4:30pm - Stephanie Piano 7:30pm - Centering	11 9:30am - Morning Prayer 10am - Bible Study 10am - HCCM 7:30pm - AA Men's Group	12 8:30am - Red Shirts @ 5:30pm - Stephanie Piano 7:30pm - Big Book Study	13 10am - Sanctuary Prep 4:30pm - Stephanie Piano	14 8:45am - Men's Coffee 4pm - Stephanie Piano 7:30pm - AA Group @	15
16 8:30am - In-Person 9:45am - SS in-person & 10:45am - In-Person 10:45am - Livestream 12pm - Youth	17 7:30pm - Centering	18 9:30am - Morning Prayer 10am - Bible Study 10am - HCCM 5:30pm - Prayer Shawl 7:30pm - AA Men's Group	19 8:30am - Red Shirts @ 10:30am - Mbrshp, Care 10:30am - Membership 7:30pm - Big Book Study	20 10am - Sanctuary Prep	21 8:45am - Men's Coffee 4pm - Stephanie Piano 7:30pm - AA Group @	22
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