

The Evangel

St. Stephen's United Methodist Church
February 17, 2017
Volume 22, No. 4

Sunday, February 19:

Seventh Sunday after
the Epiphany

Celebration Service
8:30 am

Sunday School
9:40 am

Traditional Worship
11:00 am

Sunday, February 26:
Transfiguration Sunday

Celebration Service
8:30 am

Sunday School
9:40 am

Traditional Worship
11:00 am

A Message from the Pastor

The Wesleyan Way



"Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6)

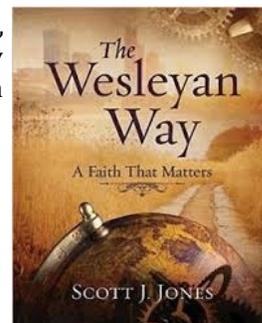
On Sunday, February 26, our Sunday School ministry (for children, youth, and adults!) will begin studying The Wesleyan Way during the season of Lent so that we might grow deeper *together* in Christ. I will also be preaching on the Wesleyan perspective of the way to salvation beginning that same Sunday and will be teaching a class on it beginning Wednesday, February 22, from 2 pm to 3:30 pm throughout Lent.

The impetus for this church-wide Lenten study came from the excitement that Lindsay and I had after we heard our new Texas Conference bishop, Scott Jones, speak at the annual clergy gathering last fall. Bishop Jones shared that his learning of John Wesley's perspective on the way of salvation as a young college student "gave me a framework to resolve some of the biggest and most important questions of my life." And he believes that revisiting our Wesleyan roots can help individuals and congregations to reclaim our faith witness to a world that desperately needs to hear about God's love today.

As we study The Wesleyan Way, we will learn about what *grace* is, why we need *grace*, how *grace* works through us, and what ordinary means we receive *grace* by. We will also learn about the attributes of God and what it means to be formed in God's image. In short, this study will be a confirmation class for all of us! Each week, we will read Bible passages and one chapter from our study guide on our own and then gather with our classes to watch a video and discuss what we have learned. The reading assignments amount to about 90 minutes per week.

Adult guides are \$10, and scholarships are available. To get involved, contact your Sunday school class ASAP or sign up for my Wednesday afternoon class in the church office so that will have enough books on hand!

Grace and peace,
Kevin



**OUR MISSION
is to know God and
make God known!**

Empowered to Connect

EMPOWERED
To Connect

Empowered to Connect (ETC) Parent Training is an interactive learning experience designed specifically for adoptive and foster parents. The ETC 8-Week Connect Course will be offered at St. Stephen's Sundays beginning February 26 through April 9, from 4:00-6:00 p.m. in Room 201 (the Covenant Sunday School classroom). The course will be taught by trained ETC leaders, Stephen and Amy Bezecny. There is no cost for the course, but there are reading assignments from 5 books that participants may choose to purchase. The nursery will be available by reservation. For more information and to register for the course, please contact Amy Bezecny at 713-542-8986 or abezecny@hopeandhealingcenter.org. To reserve the nursery for your child, please call the church office.

2 Attendance and Contributions at St. Stephen's:

| | <u>8:30 am</u> | <u>11:00 am</u> | <u>Sunday School</u> | <u>Operating</u> | <u>Building</u> | <u>Missions/ Communion</u> | <u>Other</u> | <u>Fundraiser</u> |
|-------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| February 5 | 51 | 170 | 127 | \$13,711.50 | \$257.50 | \$1,365.00 | \$532.24 | — |
| February 12 | 51 | 146 | 122 | \$9,979.00 | \$485.00 | — | \$383.45 | \$3,730.00 |

From the St. Stephen's Foundation Committee



Have Your "Best-Laid Plans" Gone Stale?

Many of the food products we purchase today are stamped with an expiration or "best by" date. An estate and personal financial plan can go "stale" as well. Consult your professionals regularly (at least every 3-5 years) to review your estate plan and other important financial documents. Changes to federal or state laws, or new life goals and opportunities can require revisions. Perhaps your family situation has changed, or you have a new passion about a program at your church or charity. It's wise to keep your plan fresh and up-to-date to ensure your wishes are honored. For more information, contact Heartspring Methodist Foundation at 713-533-3780, 1-800-521-9617 or office@heartspringmethodist.org.

Milestones



Congratulations to **Emily Mingle and Chris Fraughton**, who are engaged to be married in the spring of 2018. Emily is the daughter of Gary and Amy Mingle.

The following members made a move recently. Send them a card or note to let them know you are thinking about them:



Bob Baldwin
Elmcroft of Lake Jackson
206 Oak Dr. South Apt. 9
Lake Jackson, Texas 77566
Cell phone: 713-256-7567

Paula Brady
Silverado Kingwood
Memory Care Community
22955 Eastex Freeway
Kingwood, Texas 77339
Facility phone: 281-713-6863

Congratulations to the cooks with the winning entries at our 2017 Chili Cook-Off Fellowship Lunch on Sunday, February 5:

- 1st Place: Bryan McDaniel**
- 2nd Place: Richard Wren**
- 3rd Place Danny Niederhofer**



Congratulations to **David Jackson** for being named Assistant Scoutmaster of the Year; and to **Sea Scouts Ship 24** for the honors and recognition they received, as well, and for doing a great job as hosts, at the SHAC of the Boy Scouts of America Skyline District Awards Dinner, hosted at St. Stephen's on February 9.



Happy 2nd Anniversary, Gathering Place Volunteers!



St. Stephen's Gathering Place volunteers were honored by our ministry partner, Interfaith CarePartners, at the February 13 gathering for 2 years of service to this wonderful ministry for persons with Alzheimer's and other forms of memory loss and their caregivers!

Evangel Deadlines

| <u>Publication Date</u> | <u>News Deadline</u> |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| March 3 | Noon, Monday, February 27 |
| March 17 | Noon, Monday, March 13 |

Send articles to maryellen@stsumc.org or call the church office.

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Friday, February 17:

Troop 604 Campout at New Kentucky Park

6:00 am—Men's Prayer Breakfast (Denny's @ 34th & 290)
6:30 pm—Family Movie Night (Fellowship Hall)

Saturday, February 18:

Troop 604 Campout

8:00 am—Garden Angels Dirt Diggers Workday (Work on church flowerbeds.)
11:00 am—Memorial Service for Norma Jean Sorrells (Sanctuary)
12:00 pm—Sorrells Family Reception (Fellowship Hall)
8:00 pm—Narcotics Anonymous Support Group (Scout House)

Sunday, February 19:

Seventh Sunday After the Epiphany

Troop 504 Campout

7:30 am—Sonrise (Celebration Service) Choir Practice (Sanctuary)
8:30 am—Celebration Worship Service (Sanctuary)
9:40am—Sunday School for Children, Youth & Adults (Education Bldg)
11:00 am—Traditional Worship (Sanctuary)
12:15 pm—Jr. & Sr. High Youth Group Meeting (Youth Room 205)
12:30 pm—COVENANT Bible Study (Church Library)
1:00 pm—Disciple II Bible Study (Room 201)
3:00 pm—Launch Party for Playground for All Abilities (Oak Forest Park, 3508 Oak Forest Drive/See page 5 for more information.)

Monday, February 20:

Church Office Closed in Observance of Presidents Day

7:00 pm—Heights Young Life Meeting (Fellowship Hall)
7:00 pm—Boy Scouts Troop 604 Meeting (Scout House)

Tuesday, February 21:

9:00 am—Johnson Memorial School Classes (Education Building)
9:30 am—Line Dancing Class (Fellowship Hall)
9:45 am—First Corinthians Women's Bible Study (Room 201)
1:00 pm—Johnson School Dance Class (Room 106)
6:30 pm—GriefShare Grief Support Group (Room 201)
7:00 pm—Church Council Meeting (Room 101)
7:30 pm—Sea Scouts Ship 24 Meeting (Scout House)

Wednesday, February 22:

6:00 am—Men's Bible Study (Fellowship Hall)
9:00 am—Johnson Memorial School Classes (Education Building)
9:30 am—Senior Games (Fellowship Hall/Bring a sack lunch.)
11:00 am—Johnson School Chapel Service (Sanctuary)
1:00 pm—Johnson School Stay-N-Play (Church Library/Fellowship Hall)
1:00 pm—Pilgrimage into the Last Third of Life Study (Room 101)
6:30 pm—Car Show Planning Meeting (Room 101)

Thursday, February 23:

9:00 am—Johnson Memorial School Classes (Education Building)
1:00 pm—Johnson School Gymnastics (Room 101)
1:15 pm—Office/Program Staff Meeting (Church Library)
6:00 pm—Girl Scouts Meeting (Room 113)
6:15 pm—Handbell Choir Practice (Room 101)
7:30 pm—Chancel Choir Practice (Choir Room)

Friday, February 24:

6:00 am—Men's Prayer Breakfast (Denny's @ 34th & 290)
11:30 am—Solitaires Luncheon (Fellowship Hall)

Saturday, February 25:

8:00 pm—Narcotics Anonymous Support Group (Scout House)

Sunday, February 26:

Transfiguration Sunday

Church-Wide Study on "The Wesleyan Way" Begins

7:30 am—Sonrise (Celebration Service) Choir Practice (Sanctuary)
8:30 am—Celebration Service (Sanctuary)
9:40 am—Sunday School for Children, Youth & Adults (Education Bldg)
11:00 am—Traditional Worship (Sanctuary)
12:15 am—Jr. & Sr. High Youth Group Meeting (Youth Room 205)
12:30 pm—COVENANT Bible Study (Church Library)
1:00 pm—Disciple II Bible Study (Room 201)
4:00 pm—Empowered to Connect Parent Training (Room 201)
5:30 pm—The Fellowship Evening Service (Fellowship Hall)

Monday, February 27:

11:40 am—Staff Prayer (Sanctuary)
12:00 pm—Deadline to Turn in Articles for March 3 *Evangel* (Send to maryellen@stsumc.org or call the church office.)
7:00 pm—Heights Young Life Meeting (Fellowship Hall)
7:00 pm—Trustees Board Meeting (Church Library)
7:00 pm—Boy Scout Troop 604 Meeting (Scout House)

Tuesday, February 28:

9:00 am—Johnson Memorial School Classes (Education Building)
9:30 am—Line Dancing Class (Fellowship Hall)
9:45 am—First Corinthians Women's Bible Study (Room 201)
1:00 pm—Johnson School Dance Class (Room 101)
6:30 pm—GriefShare Grief Support Meeting (Room 201)
7:30 pm—Sea Scouts Ship 24 Meeting (Scout House)

Wednesday, March 1:

Ash Wednesday

6:00 am—Men's Bible Study (Fellowship Hall)
9:00 am—Johnson School Classes (Education Building)
9:30 am—Senior Activities Day Games & Lunch (Fellowship Hall)
1:00 pm—Johnson School Stay-N-Play (Church Library)
6:00 pm—Sonrise Choir (Celebration Service) Practice (Sanctuary)
7:00 pm—Ash Wednesday Worship Service (Sanctuary)

Thursday, March 2:

9:00 am—Johnson School Audubon Society Program (Fellowship Hall)
10:00 am—Prayer Shawl Ministry Meeting (Room 112)
11:00 am—Johnson School Chuckwagon Lunch (Fellowship Hall)
1:00 pm—Johnson School Gymnastics (Fellowship Hall)
6:15 pm—Handbell Choir Practice (Room 101)
6:30 pm—Girl Scouts Brownies/Juniors Meeting (Room 108)
7:30 pm—Chancel Choir Practice (Choir Room)

Friday, March 3:

Boy Scout Troop 604 District Camporee

6:00 am—Men's Prayer Breakfast (Denny's @ 34th & 290)
10:00 am—Bus leaves church for Solitaires trip to Alvin, Texas



Presidents Day

The church office will be closed **Monday, February 20**, in observance of Presidents Day.

Play Ball!



St. Stephen's softball season begins **Sunday, February 26**. We need players! If you are interested in playing, please contact Jim Varnell at 281-627-3994 or Bryan McDaniel at 713-303-9657.

Solitaires

The Solitaires is a ministry offering support and fellowship to any who have lost a spouse. We meet monthly for a short business meeting followed by lunch, either at the church or a restaurant. Four outings a year are planned for lunch and visiting fun places of interest. We welcome you to join us for our next meeting **Friday, February 24**, at 11:30 a.m. in the fellowship hall. A catered meal will be served at a cost of \$7 per person. Please RSVP to Betty Brashear at 281-787-1403.

We are taking a trip to Alvin, Texas, on Friday, March 3, from 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. for a tour of Bayou Wildlife Zoo and lunch at Alvin Seafood and Grill. The cost is \$7 for the tour, plus the cost of your lunch. RSVP to Betty Patterson at 713-688-3681.





Communion Offering for March

Our Communion offering for the month of March will go to **Wesley Community Center**. Women of First United Methodist Church of Houston helped found the center in 1904 after seeing the need to help families, many of them widows with children, living in poverty across the bayou from the church. Today, Wesley Center carries out its mission to “help people help themselves and others” through early childhood education, adult and family services, services for youth and seniors, food programs and a financial opportunity center. Please support Wesley Center with your prayers and generous contributions.



Car Show Planning Meeting

It's time to start planning for our annual Car Show! A meeting for all who are interested in volunteering for St. Stephen's 2017 Cruisin' for Christ Car Show will be held **Wednesday, February 22**, at 6:30 p.m. in Room 101. This year's show is scheduled for Saturday, April 22, with a rain date of April 29. All vehicle types are welcome: hot rod, classic, muscle, lead sled and more! We will have door prizes and special activities for kids in the fellowship hall. A special White Glove Tour will be available for the hearing and visually impaired. Join us at the planning meeting and help make this annual outreach event to our community a success!



Church Outdoor Workday

Mark your calendar for our Church Outdoor Workday, **Saturday, March 4**, beginning at 8:00 a.m. There is a job for everyone, from light gardening to heavier tasks. Help us spruce up the church grounds in preparation for Easter. For more information, please contact Cindy St. Lawrence at 281-448-4250 or rps95@aol.com.



Run to Stop Human Trafficking

Run, walk or donate! The Texas Annual Conference is inviting churches to a year-long campaign to raise awareness, raise funds and take action to fight human trafficking, a pervasive, modern day form of slavery. The Central South District is sponsoring **Run Houston!**, a run to help stop human trafficking, **Saturday, April 1**, at Minute Maid Park. The event will include a 10k, a 5k and a kids' 1k run. All Central South District churches are invited to work together to raise \$100,000 to help fund organizations that are doing incredible work locally, internationally and on the legislative and enforcement front to fight human trafficking. We would like to build a team from St. Stephen's to participate in the run. Sign-up sheets are available in the Narthex (sanctuary foyer). Once you sign up, Mark McDavid, our Race Captain, will contact you for further details. For more information, please visit www.txcumc.org.



Notes from the Minister of Music



Sunday, February 26th is going to be an exciting day here at St. Stephens! We are starting a church wide Bible study by our Bishop called “The Wesleyan Way.” During this study, Bishop Jones talks about the sung theology of the Methodists. Charles Wesley, John's brother, was a prolific hymn writer, with over 6,000 hymns written throughout his life. His hymns would accompany John's sermons in worship, and helped to drive home the teaching in John's sermons. The beautiful thing about Wesley's hymns is that the truths of the gospel message being delivered by John became the congregation's own truth, said with their own voices, as they sang these words. This is still true for us today. As we sing the hymns of our faith, the truths they contain enter into our minds and hearts as we sing them out with our voices.

Also on February 26th, we will begin having children's choir from 9:45-10:15. The children will learn some of the Charles Wesley hymns mentioned in the study, as well as world hymns, and an adorable song about John Wesley. They will perform for us all on Palm Sunday!

On the evening of February 26th, we will have our third “Fellowship Service” in the Fellowship hall. Join us for communion in a casual, contemporary, “come as you are” service. Invite your friends who may have a difficult time getting around in the mornings! Our children will also have a “prayground” at the service where they can be involved in the service through play. Snacks will be served before and after in the Holy Grounds Café. Our scripture will focus on caring for one another. Especially in the divisive culture we currently live in, it is so important to be reminded of God's desires for us and how we relate to one another. It is our hope that we will all learn to shake hands, not fists!

Prayer Concerns

Ed Abrahams, Dianne Alexander, Jim Alsup, Edie Anders, John & Dorothy Artz, Chappie Ashburn, Ruth Austin, Robert Baldwin, Dan Barcus & family upon the death of his mother, Maxine Barcus; Carolyn Belk, Anita Bishop, Bill Borum, Paula Brady, Ernest & Annie Brew, Nancy Buck, Chappie Collins, Earl & Gloria Collins, Dorothy Cox, Elva Duncan, Gerald Dupree, Camryn Eaton, Stephen & Brenda Edrozo, Cameron Elliott, the Emerson family, Florence Epperson, Jack Ford, Penny Gadmer, Bill & Mildred Gandin, Maria Garcia, Linda & Bob Guggia, Dorothy Haschke, Kathleen Hearn, Kathleen Heath, Edison Hicks, Ann Hill, Rev. Tom & Florence Holcomb, Elizabeth Huebner, Cathy Johnson, Thelma Jones, Lucinda Kurtas, Jim & Dianne Latham & family; Angus & Virginia Lewis, Penny Loy, Carol Luce, Lavon Mahon & family, Bonnie Maple, Ginny Martin, Marsha Massey, Frances Mayberry, Ed Mills, Bill Moan, Mary Nelle Moore, Nina Myers (hospice), Michael Niederhofer, Gary & Dian Parker, Jody Parker, Betty Parks, Jean Parks, Margie Perron, Gloria Powell, Billy Raines, Milton & Noni Ray, Bill & Caroline Reaves, Bob & Gladys Reeve, the family of Rev. Dr. Robbie Robinson, former pastor of St. Stephen's; Betty Roberts, Rogers & Jane Roberts, Kathleen Saathoff, Donna Schmidt, Barbara Smith, Lura Smith, Melissa Soto and family upon the death of her sister-in-law, Rosa Cruz; Hazel Swearingen, Danny Thomason, Hazel Thompson, Ronnie Vance, Bitsy Vilven, John and Judy Warfield upon the death of their son, Stacy; Margaret White (hospice), Paul Wieting, George Wood, Gay Woods, Charles Zimmermann

In Our Prayers

In the Military

Dirk Ray Jr., Allen Troth

In the Hospital

Colonial Oaks Westchase—Anna Ruth Putnam (hospice)

Legend Oaks West Houston—Margaret Demuth (rehab)

Pathways Memory Care at Villa Toscana—Claytie Abrahams (hospice)

Legend Oaks Northwest—Elizabeth Dennard (rehab)

Memorial Hermann Greater Heights—Ed Bradley



From the Director of Student Ministries

Youth Lunch Out

We are having a planning lunch out at Fuddruckers on Sunday, February 19 after the 11am service. This lunch is for parents, teachers, and students to plan events and activities for the rest of the semester.

Thank You for the Treats!

On behalf of the youth group, thank you so much to our Dessert Extravaganza team! You did a great job organizing, getting bakers, and getting the word out to the community. We really appreciate you wanting to support the youth and all that they do.

Pennies for our Playground

St. Stephen's has gotten a booth at the "Pennies for our Playground" on Sunday, February 19 from 3-6pm. The event is a fundraiser to upgrade the park, and some of the improvements include an inclusive playground for all abilities, more shade, pet waste bins, water fountains for dogs, and more. Come out and represent St. Stephen's and be involved in making a difference in our community. Our booth will feature a globe shaped like a box that you can color that says, "Be the change you want to see in the world."

Family Movie Night

We are having a Family Movie Night again on Friday, February 17! It starts at 6:30pm, and we will provide lemonade and popcorn. Please feel free to bring dinner to eat while you are there. This family friendly movie is about a bunny who befriends a fox and they have to save their city.

Messy Church

Our next Messy Church is Wednesday, March 22, from 5:30-7pm. We will have dinner together, crafts, and a short worship service all about Easter! Please contact Mary Gossett to volunteer.

Summer Dates

Lakeview Summer Camp: June 11-16, this is open to 3rd grade and up, and the cost is \$400.

UM ARMY: June 25-July 1, this is for 8th grade and up, and the cost is \$250.

Big House: July 6-9, this is for 5th-8th grades, and the cost is \$125. We will be going down the street to St. Matthew's!

VBS: July 17-21, save the date!

Mary Gossett



Children, youth and adults of all ages enjoyed the sweet treats at our 2017 Dessert Extravaganza on Saturday, February 11!

Johnson Memorial School News

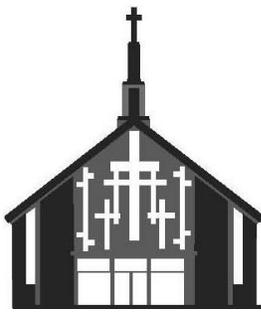


Save the date for the JMS auction on March 29 in the Fellowship Hall: LOOK HOW WE'VE GROWN!

Every other year, we host an event to raise funds for our program. This year's Silent Auction and Art Exhibition will raise funds to replace some well-used classroom furniture, purchase new outdoor musical toys and a large, colorful welcome mat for our main school entrance. If you have a service or product that you could donate for our silent auction, or if you would be willing to solicit donations from area businesses, it would go a long way towards making our auction a success. We welcome any and all donations as we hope to provide something for every taste and every price point. Everyone is also welcome to attend; we'll have a food truck, a magician,

childcare for those under three and a LOT of fun! Please contact the Director at jms@stsumc.org with questions or for additional information. Donations can be dropped off in the church or school office until March 15.

Registration for the 2017-2018 school year is now open for returning students, and will begin March 1 for new students. Forms are available on St. Stephen's website: www.stsumc.org.



**St. Stephen's
United Methodist Church**

2003 West 43rd Street
Houston, Texas 77018
(713) 686-8241

www.stsumc.org



Rev. Kevin Otto
Senior Pastor
kevin@stsumc.org

Program Staff



Rev. Lindsay Smith
Minister of Music
music@stsumc.org



Mary Gossett
*Director of Student
Ministries*
youth@stsumc.org



Juyeon Kim
Organist



Candice Croker
*Director,
Johnson Memorial School*
jms@stsumc.org



Melissa Soto
Nursery Coordinator

**Anita Cabrera, Adriana Montes,
Rachel Montes**
Nursery Staff

Administrative Staff



Mary Jessie
Accounting Manager
mary@stsumc.org



Mary Ellen King
Executive Secretary
maryellen@stsumc.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**PERIODICAL
PAID
HOUSTON, TX**

Family Movie Night



Family Movie Night is back this **Friday, February 17!** The fun begins at 6:30 p.m. with an animated movie approved for all audiences. Snacks will be served. You are welcome to bring dinner-in-a-bag, if the family is hungry. Invite your neighbor!

New GriefShare Group Begins



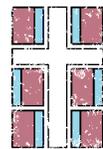
When you are grieving the death of someone close, friends and family often want to help, but don't know how. Our GriefShare group is led by caring people who have experienced grief and understand how you feel because we've been in the same place. GriefShare offers support and encouragement for your grief journey. A new GriefShare support group will meet weekly at St. Stephen's on Tuesdays beginning **February 21** at 6:30 pm in Room 201. Each session includes a Christian-based video teaching by top experts in the field of grief recovery, followed by small group discussion. For more information, please visit www.griefshare.org or call the church office.

Messy Church



Messy Church, a family-friendly worship experience, is held monthly at St. Stephen's in our fellowship hall. Join us for the next Messy Church **Wednesday, February 22**, beginning at 5:30 p.m. with dinner, followed by crafts and fun activities. We'll conclude with a short worship service about Easter. We hope to see you and your family there!

The Fellowship Evening Service



Our next Sunday evening service, **The Fellowship**, will be held **February 26** at 5:30 p.m. in the fellowship hall. This casual, acoustic contemporary service is a great place for those who are new to the church, or those who have been away from the church for awhile. Coffee and snacks will be served before and after the service. This is a perfect opportunity to invite that friend or neighbor you've been thinking about!

Ash Wednesday Worship



Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent, a season of spiritual preparation for the coming of Easter. We welcome you to begin your Lenten journey by joining us for worship at 7:00 p.m. on **Ash Wednesday, March 1.**

Defensive Driving



St. Stephen's will host a Defensive Driving Course, sponsored by AARP, **Monday, March 20**, from 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. in our fellowship hall. The fee is \$15 for AARP members, and \$20 for non-AARP members. Please note that this course is for auto insurance discounts, not traffic ticket dismissal. Please RSVP to Florence Bowman at 713-682-4513.