



We are all, without exception, beloved children of God

From the Senior Pastor

I hope you've been able to engage with our current worship service, "A Disciple Is..." in the last few weeks. We have been talking about tangible ways to live out our faith in the midst of the pandemic when so many of the ways we are used to practicing our faith are not available or safe. We continue to monitor the situation and learn about new ways we can engage.

Because of our commitment to the fact that we are all, without exception, beloved children of God, we do not want to do the sorts of things that put vulnerable people at risk. That's why we've been slow and cautious with the opportunities we are offering, doing things like opening the sanctuary for prayer on Wednesdays and allowing for some outdoor activities are examples of ways this has been successful!

That's why we are excited to try another new outdoor activity that we think fits great with another of our core values: Worship connects us with God and with each other. Sunday, October 4 we will have drive-through communion in the West parking lot. We'll go over instructions again in our virtual worship service and with an email, but here's the plan: Enter the parking lot from Glebe, and drive through to the covered drive by the sanctuary. You'll be given to-go communion elements and we'll pray together. If there's a long line, go ahead and pull into a parking spot to wait. Everyone who isn't a volunteer should stay in their car, we'll have folks to welcome you and point you in the right direction. Can't make it to the drive through? We'll still have communion as part of our virtual service, too!

We're looking forward to seeing you in this new way. I understand how tired and frustrated so many of us are. Dan Barcus shared this article with me and I have found it to be incredibly helpful, and had others tell me the same: <http://bit.ly/evangel1020>. Know that your church family is praying for you and with you, and wants to know how we can help you stay close to God. Be well, beloved!

Paz, Nathan



**"Your Surge Capacity Is Depleted—
It's Why You feel Awful"
(written by Tara Haelle)**

Charge Conference 2020

St. Stephen's annual Charge Conference will be held Saturday, November 7, at 1:00 pm. Due to the pandemic, this year's conference will not be an in-person event, but will be virtual via Zoom.

Each year just prior to Charge Conference, we publish lists of "lost" members. These are members for which we either do not have current contact information or have not had any response from after attempting to reach out to them. If you have current contact or other information that would be helpful in reaching any of the members on the lists below, please contact Mary Ellen at maryellen@stshtx.org or 713-295-0040. Members on the second reading list will be removed by the 2020 Charge Conference.

Lost List First Reading: Jawaan Alexander, Edwin Day, Jamison Dyer, Nancy Gibbins, Betty Gleason, Beverly Harlow, Debra Harlow, John Harlow, Lynda Hart-Southward, Dorothy Hedges, Claudia Ergolinsky Hollis, Darien Large, Brooke Ledbetter, Zackary Odom, Jennifer Pratts

Lost List Second Reading: David Crawford, Kathleen Saathoff, Tom Smith (Lura Smith's son)

Cover photo: The Johnson Memorial School began virtual instruction on September 15. Read more about it on page 3.

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Please submit dates, pictures and information for the November 2020 Evangel by October 26 to info@stsumc.org.



The church does not belong to us

From the Director of Family Ministries

UMYF is Back On!

Sunday, October 18th from 5-7 PM, UMYF will be back outside in the Education Building parking lot. Hopefully, the weather will be "almost tolerable" by then. Due to youth being outside, we'll set a rain date of October 25th.

Our first UMYF back will be a large scale trivia game. Youth will begin at one end of the parking lot six feet apart. Masks are required. There will be twenty cones along the sides of the parking lot. Every time a student answers a question correctly on their individual whiteboard, they move up a spot. The winner is the first one to the other end of the parking lot.

We'll throw in some modifiers and tricks to keep things interesting.

After our game is through, we'll eat pizza outside on the grassy area spaced apart, catch up on the bedlam of the past few months, and have a Bible study.

Steven Fisher



Johnson Memorial School News

Since Sept 15, JMS staff members have offered Virtual Learning for 34 preschool students for the first time in its 53-year school history. Every Monday, detailed packets are picked up by parents at the school with lessons, crafts and handwriting activities to be completed during JMS school days (Tues-Thurs). Twice a day, students participate in either live Zoom videos with their teacher and classmates or watch a recorded video made by a JMS Helping Teacher on topics we traditionally do in-person such as: cooking, gardening, and science. Steven Fisher has shared videos to bless our lunch-boxes at the start of the school year and plans to bless the animals later this week! Brenda Paulk, even during her chemotherapy treatment, has created 4-5 music class videos for our students each day - we are so thankful for her strength and passion for sharing music with our students during such a challenging time in her life. On September 24, JMS students experienced their first virtual field trip with the Houston Grand Opera. A teaching artist named Mr. Alejandro read and sang (opera-style) a local author's book entitled "The Armadillo's Dream" and taught our JMS friends how to sing high and low alongside him (yes, imagine un-muting and singing opera with 34 preschoolers!). We had a great time!





God is in our neighborhood and not just in our building

Get Involved

Breast Cancer Awareness

We would like to remind everyone that October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, an annual campaign to increase awareness of the disease. "Hope" is our word of affirmation for October.

- God can transform a valley of thorns into a door of hope. (see Hosea 2:15)
- Hope is important, but it lacks substance until filled with faith. (see Hebrews 11:1)

—From the ushers for the 8:30 am Celebration Service; Barbara Smith, Head Usher

Financial Gifts

God is doing great things in and through St. Stephens, and we continue to seek new ways of being the church. The COVID situation has made many of our normal ways of making financial offerings unfeasible. If you are able to make a one-time gift or set up a recurring gift, it will be put to good use. To set up online giving, visit ststx.org and click on "give." Our giving provider, Planning Center, uses Stripe to process all financial transactions, and Stripe maintains the highest standards of privacy and security with financial info. If you do not do online giving, you are welcome to mail checks to the church; even though the offices are closed we are still monitoring the mail. Thank you for continuing to support what God is doing through our church!

Support Furlough Kitchen Houston

In April, St. Stephen's began a new ministry partnership providing free meals to people who have been laid off or furloughed from their jobs due to the Coronavirus. Since then, the Furlough Kitchen ministry has seen a steady increase in demand. If you would like to help this ministry continue to feed hungry people in our area, you can make a donation by visiting <https://furloughkitchenhouston.org/>





Worship connects us with God and with each other

Come and Go Silent Prayer

The sanctuary is open weekly for come-and-go silent prayer Wednesdays from 4-7 pm. We are working hard to ensure that everyone who chooses to participate will be able to pray in a space they love and also feel safe. Masks are required of all participants, restroom facilities remain closed, and numbers are limited to ensure safe social distancing. If you want to help with this ministry, or for more information, please contact Dan Barcus at dbarcus1@comcast.net or Donna Ebelt-Wilson at dlewilson@gmail.com.

October Communion Offering

Our Communion offering for the month of October will go to Houston Area Women's Center, an organization that works to end domestic and sexual violence. HAWC has been answering the calls of survivors for forty-three years, keeping women, children and families safe from abuse. HAWC'S services are free, confidential and available to all. Thank you for supporting Houston Area Women's Center with your prayers and generous contributions.



Volunteer for Liturgy or Scripture Reading

Each Sunday while we are worshipping away from the sanctuary, we will have two roles available to be filled by our congregation: Liturgy and Affirmation of Faith Reader, and Scripture Reader. There are a few requirements for those who wish to participate. You will need to have a device (phone, video camera, etc.) that lets you film video and audio. You'll also need to be knowledgeable on how to upload a file. Depending on the video length, you might be able to email, but more likely, you will have to share your video through online storage (Google Drive for example). We ask that videos be filmed in landscape (sideways) orientation as this will display better for our worship.



If you are interested in being a liturgist or reader for Sunday worship services, please contact Steven Fisher at steven@stshtx.org or Nathan at nathan@stshtx.org. We'll email you the script that you'll be using. Don't worry about trying to learn it by heart. Write it down,

More About Using Zoom

Did you know that you can participate in Zoom as a conference call? For either our 9:30 a.m. Sunday morning Sunday School, or our 12 p.m. Sunday Virtual Potluck, call [346 248 7799](tel:3462487799) and when prompted for a meeting code, enter [339 172 0915](tel:3391720915) followed by the pound key.

COVID-19 Ministries and Resources

The work of the church goes on during this global pandemic. We have a page on our website that has information on ways to connect with us, as well as links to media stories about St. Stephen's COVID-19 ministries. Visit stshtx.org/coronavirus to find instructions on how to connect for worship and Bible studies, resources for children and families, how to support COVID-19 ministries and more!



The stories of scripture transform our own stories



10/4 & 10/11



10/18—11/22



In Memory

We extend our prayers and sympathy to the families of the following members who passed away in September, 2020:

- **Doug Cherry**, who passed away unexpectedly at their home on September 17. Doug was a member of the praise and worship team for St. Stephen's 8:30 am Sunday worship service for several years. He spent his life playing music for others to enjoy, and was also a member of the Country Ham Band and the Sunshiners Band, a volunteer group of singers and musicians who perform for seniors in the Greater Houston area. A private service was held at Pat Foley Funeral Home on September 26. A celebration of his life and special friendships will be held at his and Mary Brennan's home, as Doug would want it, at a later date.
- **Loretta Shaw**, who died September 26. Prior to a recent serious illness, Loretta had been an active member of St. Stephen's since transferring from St. Timothy's United Methodist Church in January of 2014. A private graveside service will be held on October 8.
- **Lee Kruse**, who also passed away September 26. Lee and his wife, La Nell, have been active members of St. Stephen's since 1966, serving in leadership and various ministries, and leading Bible studies. A celebration of life will be held for Lee at a later date.

The couple moved to Rosenberg recently. Here is the new address: **1207 Governors Lane, Rosenberg, Texas, 77469.**

Prayer Concerns

John & Dorothy Artz, Anita Bishop, Rhonda Boehm, Sandy Bonnin, Isaac Booth, Florence Bowman, Mary Brennan & family, Tom Burton, Arlene Caler, Nathan Cartwright, Jan Chambers (Shelley Holcombe's mother), Jess Chambers, Delight Clary, Chappie & Gloria Collins, the Conner family, Janet Cummins, Alice David & family, Andrew Drapkin, the Eads family, Allen Ebelt, Kayla Ebelt, Walter Ebelt, Sarah Eloff, Megan Eyre, Earl & Irene Fallen, Rod Fisher, Kathy Gunter, Kathleen Heath, Dorothy & Rick Hedges, Charm Hensley and son, Daniel; Lola Hensley, Tripp Hensley, Paula Hicks, Brittany Hietpas, Jason Holcombe, Dorrie Jackson, La Nell Kruse & family, Rhonda Linder, Dot Lockhart, Penny Loy, Brianna Matheis, Frances Mayberry, Ann McIntire, Henry & Sarah McKinley, Wayne Meyenberg, Donald Owens, Dian Parker, Brenda Paulk, Elliott Perez, the Piercefield family, Liz Powers & family, Milton & Noni Ray, Rogers & Jane Roberts, Terry & Sandra Russell, the family of Loretta Shaw, Barbara Smith, the Soto family, Preston Taylor, Jan Weeks, Paul Wieting, Patricia Williams, Todd Wilson, Carol Yip Choy, the Zanelli family, Shara Zatopek

Social Justice Prayers: The sin of racism and its effects on all of us; Members of the CITGO6: Tomeu Vadell, Gustavo Cardenas, Jorge Toledo, Alirio Zambrano, Jose Luis Zambrano, Jose Angel Pereira; and all who are imprisoned or persecuted unjustly

In the Military Allen Clutter, Keanna Piercefield

In Hospital Joseph Balli—Memorial Hermann Greater Heights



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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Fun Fact

Furlough Kitchen has served over 6,000 meals since the ministry began in April of this year!

What's Inside

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Our Vision

-  We are all, without exception, beloved children of God
-  The church does not belong to us
-  God is in our neighborhood and not just in our building
-  Worship connects us with God and with each other
-  The stories of scripture transform our own stories

Stay at Home Schedule

Here are the weekly activities during our Stay at Home schedule:

Daily:

Devotional Emails

Sunday mornings:

Sunday School: 9:30 am (Zoom, Facebook)

Worship: 11 am Youtube, Facebook

Feast Virtual Potluck: noon, Zoom

Tuesdays:

Furlough Kitchen Meal Pick-Up, 4:30-6 pm (Education Bldg Parking Lot)

Tuesdays at noon and Thursdays at 7 pm:

Houston's Virtual Choir Rehearsal

(Anybody may join via phone, smartphone, tablet or computer. Contact Pastor Suzi at suzi@stsumc.org for information.)

Wednesdays: Come-and-Go Silent Prayer in the Sanctuary: 4-7 pm (Please wear a mask.)

For information on how to connect with Zoom, where to find us on Facebook or YouTube, or to sign up for our email list, visit stshtx.org/coronavirus