



# For His Glory

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF TROY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH - MARCH 2021

## From Pastor David

When Mandi and I found out that we were expecting our first child, the OB gave us a due date of March 1. For some time, I held out hope that we would get to the due date and go past it by one day so my baby could be born on March 2, Texas Independence Day. By mid February, I was the only one in my household that was still holding out some hope for a March 2 delivery date. Mandi was done being pregnant, and come to find out, Ellie was ready to greet the world on February 16. There went my hopes for my baby to be born on Texas Independence Day!

Independence is something that we hold dear in the United States, doubly so in Texas. In many ways, independence is our national ethos. We prize the ability of self determination and shun the controlling influences of others. Freedom is a value that we hold dear, above many others in our society. Yet, I recall the words that are spoken when we break bread and share the cup at the Lord's Table, "Free us for joyful obedience, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

It's a strange thought, isn't it? To ask that God free us so that we may be obedient. Isn't the point of freedom that we don't have to answer to anyone except ourselves? Perhaps, the answer is a little bit more. I think, with God and freedom much of our discussion here begins with creation. God created us free. Free to choose. Ultimately our freedom of choice falls to a singular decision that we must make each day, sometimes multiple times during a day. We are free to choose God or we are free to reject God. Humanity was given a wonderful, and tremendously precious gift in that we were not created slaves for God. As the psalmist exclaims, "What are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor. You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet." What a wonderful gift of freedom and responsibility we have.

Yet, we know that oftentimes we misuse and abuse this freedom we were given at creation. We push the limits and boundaries of our freedom. From Adam and Eve who had the freedom of the entire garden except for the one boundary God gave them; that they, "should not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden." To Moses who delivered to the 10 Commandments to the Israelites. To Christ, who gave a new commandment to his disciples, "love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind...and a second is like it: you shall love your neighbor as yourself." In these examples we see that we have limits to our freedom that God has set. We are free to cross them, much like the limits and boundaries to our freedom as US citizens. We are free to break the law, but we must know that there will be consequences to our actions. So too with God. We are given the freedom to choose, to choose God or to reject God. When we reject God, we allow sin to begin to control our lives. Unlike God however, sin seeks to enslave us to its desires, to destroy our freedom so that its power and ways may control our lives and our world.



# From Pastor David Continued...

What is the answer to this sin, whatever it may be in your life? What is the answer to the destruction, death, and enslavement that the force of sin exerts in our lives? The answer is Christ, who broke the power of sin upon the cross, who breaks the power of sin anew when we choose Him, when we choose God. We are free in Christ. We are free to choose. To choose God: Father, Son and Spirit. Or we are free to reject them. When we choose God, we choose to be freed from sin that steals, kills, and destroys life. When we choose God, we choose to be a part of the life (both in this world and the next) that Christ offers to us. We are indeed freed in Christ! The Spirit guides and leads us away from the enslavement and destruction of sin, into a better way of living. We are freed in Christ, because of the cross and his resurrection, we know that death and destruction do not have to be our final destination. We are freed in Christ, but we must live in a new way if we are to follow him. If we are to receive our freedom from sin, we must listen, trust, and obey the One who freed us. "Free us for joyful Obedience!" It isn't an oxymoron, asking to be freed from sin so we may be made anew in God's image. Because of our freedom, we choose God: Father, Son and Spirit. Once we choose God, we must follow as we are led into life abundant.

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## **Update from last month's newsletter article regarding the future of the United Methodist Church:**

The close of February and beginning of March have been a busy time regarding news related to the future of our denomination. The denomination released a statement on February 25 that the anticipated General Conference scheduled for late August thru early September of this year would be postponed for an additional year. This postponement is due to the continued presence of COVID in our world. Because of the global nature of our denomination and the necessity of travel by delegates from all over the world, the decision was made to give more time to allow as many delegates as possible to participate. As things stand, there are a number of people who would be unable to secure visas, who would not be able to travel into the US because of the unavailability of COVID testing where they live, and the fact that COVID vaccinations are not going to be as widespread as they are in the United States.

Coming in the wake of this news, the conservative caucus of our denomination who have been meeting under the name Wesleyan Covenant Association have released a blueprint for a new Methodist denomination called the Global Methodist Church. They have committed to staying the course within the United Methodist Church with the intention to begin as a new denomination as soon as the General Conference that is now scheduled for 2022 concludes with procedures for the amicable separation of our denomination. This understanding will exist as long as the centrists and progressives of the denomination remain committed to pursuing amicable separation in 2022.

What this means for us here at Troy UMC is that for the next year and a half, much will remain the same as we know it within our congregation and within the denomination. The Book of Discipline has not changed and continues to restrict the ordination and marriage of homosexual persons. We exist as a denomination in a state of limbo regarding our future, knowing that we will separate, but not exactly how or when. Our task as a church does not change, we exist to serve Jesus here in Troy! If you want to speak more about the future of our denomination, please reach out to Pastor David.

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## **Confirmation**

Pastor David will be offering a confirmation class this spring. Confirmation is the process where our youth explore their faith in a deep way, learn about the history and theology of Methodism, and have the option to profess faith in Jesus and join the church as full members. If your youth is ready to participate in confirmation this year please talk with Pastor David. You can reach him at his cell phone: (254) 784-3102 or email: [david@troymethodist.org](mailto:david@troymethodist.org).

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## **Mask Mandate**

Recently, Governor Abbott rescinded the state-wide mask mandate. Until vaccinations become more wide-spread in our county, we ask that everyone who comes to worship or participates in events at our church still wear a mask.



## Birthdays

4	Katherine Maedgen
9	Emily Joliff
10	Shirley Haas, Betty Hester
12	Drew Mitchell, Zach Allen
15	Darryce Ross, Melissa O'Donnell, Donal Bush
17	Manette Fowler, Jana Letbetter, Amber Crawford
20	David Coufal
21	Brigitte Allen, Adam Roessler, Becca Joliff
22	Joshua Bastin
23	Johnny Giebler
25	Sean Huffman
26	Georgie Mitchell
27	Diana Massey
29	Carolyn Walston
30	Bret Allen
31	Nancy Birdsell, Brady Hart

## Anniversaries

14	Cameron & Jamie Roucloux
16	Joey & Amber Gresham
20	Robert & Megan Mosley-Mick
23	Jack & Becky Hobday

### Easter Eggstravaganza

Saturday, April 3  
10:00-11:30am

It will be here before we know it! We weren't able to hold it last year and while we will do some modifications this year for on going safety issues, we are moving forward with this amazing community event.

We are in need of people to fill eggs. We have a bunch of new, empty eggs but will never pass up donations of filled eggs. There will be totes with empty eggs for you to pick up at the back of the church in the coming weeks.

We are also asking for individuals, families, LYFE groups or other small groups to be willing to help us share the amazing story of Holy Week and Easter morning!

Please get in touch with Christin as soon as possible for details.

### ~ Memorials ~

*In Memory of Fay Niesen* by Richard & Betty Hester

*In Memory of Larry Ryter* by Richard & Betty Hester, Charlie & Janice Porter, Tooter & Susan Creech,  
Gary & Donna Allison, David & Nancy Holmes, Tim & Janice Kirkscey

*In Memory of Ferol Dene Ozment* by Charlie & Janice Porter, Barbara Thompson, Katherine Maedgen,  
Tooter & Susan Creech

*In memory of Lanell Welch* by Charlie & Janice Porter, Tooter & Susan Creech

*In memory of James Bartlett* by Tooter & Susan Creech

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Dear Troy UMC Family,

We have been so richly blessed by your outpouring of love for our family during the Christmas season. Thank you so much for the generous gift that you gave this year. This has been a hard year for so many, yet you continue to show your generosity towards the staff through your actions, and we are so grateful. We are also so thankful for the baby shower that the UMW hosted for us, the shower our Sunday school class hosted, and the continued outpouring of love on our Olivia. Your prayers, kind words, and words of encouragement have meant so much to us as we've entered into this new season of life. We cannot wait to share her with you all!

With love,

Cameron, Jamie, and Olivia