

January 2024 Newsletter



Worshipping with the Rockport Community since 1870

FIRST UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH
of Rockport

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Happy 2024!! I pray everyone had a wonderful Christmas. What a joy it was to share Christmas Eve with so many of you.

It's hard to believe that 2023 is over and we are going straight into 2024. As we look ahead to this new year, I am reminded that God is preparing us for what lies ahead. The end of the year is always so busy getting ready for Christmas with family, friends and all that comes with the wonderful season of Advent.

So, as we look to 2024 let's remember to slow down, be still with God so that we can clearly hear and step into what God has planned for us as a congregation as well as individually. John 15:5 tells us "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit, he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful." We always do better physically, mentally, spiritually, and in service when we walk closer to Christ, depending on and trusting the strength we find in him. This intentional stillness as we walk with Christ will allow a peacefulness and light to shine through us as we bear the fruit of Christ to the rest of the world in 2024. I look forward to this journey with all of you!

Happy New Year,
Pastor Mel



This monthly newsletter is published by
First United Methodist Church of Rockport,
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Rev. Melissa Lind, Senior Pastor.....x2248
Patty Impens, Business Manager.....x2574
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Madaline Brown, First Learning Tree Director.....x2584
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Christmas with the Church



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Children's Time



Children's Nativity



Staff Tree



VBS



Epiphany - Looking for Christ in the Ordinary

by Sarah Parsons

I don't normally see Christ in my everyday life. Even when I look carefully, even when I try to conceive of Christ in abstract terms, the days look pretty drab and ordinary.

Take today, for instance. It is Sunday. I got up; I studied; I went to church; I studied some more, talked to friends on the phone, went for a run, had dinner with my parents and brother, and now I'm home writing. The day was mostly gray. The only remarkable thing about it was that it was unseasonably warm, but that doesn't make it much more interesting.

When I lament my ordinary, boring life, I am chastised by Rilke's words in *Letters to a Young Poet*: "If your everyday life seems poor, don't blame it; blame yourself; admit to yourself that you are not enough of a poet to call forth its riches."

This seems to say that there are no boring lives, no boring days, only failures of insight and imagination. If my day seems dull, Rilke says, I am just not reading it right.

LOOKING FOR ARROWHEADS

Finding magic in daily life is hard for me. It requires patience and perseverance, like when I was a kid and looked beside creeks for arrowheads: I never actually found one. I looked and looked, found no arrowheads, just lots of rocks. When I read my regular days, I feel like I am sifting through the gravel of my life, finding nothing but more gravel, never the arrowhead that I'm hoping for.

But what if I'm looking for the wrong thing? What if the arrowhead isn't the only magical find possible? Perhaps there is something of beauty in these rocks themselves. If rocks are magic, then I can read my day differently: I got up on a warm Sunday morning, the air moist and windy, with all the energy of a storm coming. I went to my favorite café to study, drank good coffee, and studied how to run human services agencies well, so that they can do good work and communities can get healthier.

I went to church and heard a sermon about listening to one's dreams, and I felt hope for a new year. A friend called and we made plans to see a movie together. With the evening still warm and blustery, I went for a run and pushed myself hard, listening to music. I met my parents and brother for dinner, talked about the previous week; leaving, I hugged my parents, told them I loved them. Was Christ not in that day? Was that day so drab, or was Christ with me, born over and over again, and in my cursory first reading I glanced right over him?

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CHRIST IS HERE

These Christ-sightings are an Epiphany message for me. Christmas says Christ is here, born into the world. Epiphany says it's up to us to find him, and it may not be easy. We may have to walk a long road, follow strange guidance, and encounter Herod-like dangers. Epiphany celebrates humankind's accomplishment of a very difficult task. Christ's birth is a miracle indeed, but it's possibly a still greater miracle that we, the earnest yet ever-benighted human race, manage to recognize him, tiny and humble, lying in a barn in some no-name town.

Epiphany calls me to step up my theological reflection a notch. When I expect Christ to enter my day with lots of fanfare and, at the end of the day, bemoan that "nothing happened," I wonder if I am getting Christ wrong somehow. Christ originally entered the world in pretty ordinary human style, even more humbly than most humans do.

At the same time, the magic of Christ is that love became incarnate here, that we are promised abundant life, triumph over death. Those concepts seem so abstract, too lofty to apply to one day in one small life.

Yet Christ is precisely that point at which the divine and human intersect, where God meets us in our mundane daily reality. This is one of the most beautiful insights of Christianity: that God comes into our place, with all its ordinariness. Our God is willing to live through our boring days with us.

Epiphany celebrates not only that God chooses to do this, but that one day we woke up and noticed it. May we wake up to this fact again and again, experiencing one glorious Epiphany after another.

From the Upper Room Magazine



KEEP SEEKING HIM

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MUSIC NEWS



Happy New Year!

January 4th Both the Choir and the Band will resume practicing for Sunday Worships.

If you have even toyed with the idea of joining the choir, now is a great time. We have all new music that we begin learning.

We are especially looking for more men to join the choir. I've got some music that I'd like for the choir to learn, but to pull it off, we need more men in the choir. Rehearsals are Wednesday nights from 6:30 – 7:30.

The band, as always, is looking for instrumentalists, particularly guitarists. If you're interested in playing with us, you're welcome to join us on Wednesday evenings from 5:30 – 6:30

MARK YOUR CALENDARS! January 20th at 6:00pm the Southern Plainsmen Quartet will be here in our sanctuary to sing for us! Many of you have heard this quartet in the past. If you haven't, you're in for a treat. The Southern Plainsmen are a great group. They have been singing Southern Gospel Music while touring the US for over 40 years. The concert is free of charge. There will be a love offering for the quartet as well as an opportunity to buy merchandise and recordings. Please, tell all of your friends about this wonderful group!



Ever wonder if you could make more of a positive difference in our Rockport community? The answer is a resounding "yes." Simply volunteer to help out with Community Table. All it takes is a food handler's license. Joyce Palmer (512.716.9973) and Chris Stumpf (210.268.6855) can answer all of your questions and even share a web sight where you can take the test on line. Passing is guaranteed!



BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES—



BIRTHDAYS

Wendy Bryan (11)
Kevin Carruth (16)
Linda Hamilton (17)
Kenneth Goodner ((19)
Daniel Hanson (23)
J.C. Morton (28)

ANNIVERSARIES

Tim & Debbie Chapman (8)
Neal & Courtney Shane (13)
Pat & Dina Murphy (17)
Ken & Barbara Helbling (22)



Coastal Bend Emmaus



Renewing Christian Disciples, Strengthening Local Churches

The next Men's Walk to Emmaus is scheduled for February 1-4. This walk is coming up quickly, and there are spaces still available for pilgrims.

The other day I had someone ask me, "Where are we going to walk to?" That isn't what the Walk to Emmaus is about. Instead, it refers to Luke Chapter 24 where, following his resurrection Jesus joins a couple of the disciples as they walk to Emmaus.

During the 4 day Walk to Emmaus you will learn about Grace, Discipleship and what it means to be a Christian in today's World. Pilgrims on this walk will worship, sing, and learn together. No matter where you are on your spiritual journey, you will et something from this encounter.

Want to learn more? Ask anyone that has already been on a Walk to Emmaus. For applications, go to: www.coastalbendemmas.org or see Paul in the Music Room.

De Colores,

Paul



United Methodist Men

All males that attend this church are automatically members of this group. ***This means you!*** Welcome.

The Men's Group meets on the first Tuesday of each month at 7:30am in the Fellowship Hall. We enjoy sharing a light breakfast (unless someone contributes a hearty breakfast. LOL). There are many roles that men play in the church. We want to increase our presence and ignite our fellowship within the church and the outside community. **We are Proud to be Methodists.** Let's be visible and active.



Wednesday Rehearsals
Praise Band 5:30pm
Choir 6:30pm

Seniorcize Exercise Class

Mondays - 10:00 am
Tuesdays - 10:00 am
Thursdays - 10:00 am
Fellowship Hall 1
Bring small hand weights
Water and a Friend

Small Group Study Opportunities

In person:

Sunday

Cross Talk
Truth Seekers
Children & Youth

Monday

Disciple 1
Disciple 3

Wednesday

Lively Bible Study
Women in the Word

Thursday

The Thursday Disciple Group

Online:

Bible in One Year
App by Nicky Gumbel

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From First Learning Tree

New Year, New Us!

This last year has been so much fun, but we are not slowing down. To start the new year, we are changing our rooms to add another infant classroom. This is going to assist our community with the ability to go to work, and have a safe place to leave their infants. Also, we are going to be planning some fun events for the year, and would love to have the church involved. Children are in need of support from churches to ensure they learn about Jesus. It is a blessing that our school is affiliated with a church, and we have access to it in our parking lot. Please consider joining us in some of these events, and be a part of the “village, it takes to raise a child”.

Thank you for being on this journey with us.

Christmas Angel Tree

The angel tree was a big success. Thank you Cassidy Sanchez for organizing the tree. Every angel was selected by a church member. All the recipients were so overwhelmed and grateful for your love and generosity to them, their children and their fur babies.

A **BIG Thank You** to all who gave to those in need this Christmas and also to those who wanted to participate. Next year we hope to have more angels to provide for. Even Mrs. Claus came to help GERALYN, our Wesley Nurse, hand out presents!



WOMEN IN THE WORD 2024 BIBLE STUDY

Women In The Word will be starting their next Bible Study on Jan. 10th. We will be studying the Psalms with Sandra Richter.

Sandra Richter brings our ancestors in the faith to the table where we learn from them in a cross-cultural experience bridging historical and modern day life. This eight-session study of the Book of Psalms masterfully mixes scholarly and practical teaching through the most-known wisdom Book of the Bible.

The key messages of this study include: *what* the Book of Psalms is (the hymnbook of ancient Israel), *how* it was utilized in Israelite worship (the various “forms” of the Psalms), and *why* the Book of Psalms remains critical to our devotional lives today. Sandra also dives into the concrete realities of Israelite worship (the tabernacle, temple, priesthood, and sacrifice) as well as Israel’s theology of worship wrapped up in their theocratic world view.

Experience the Psalms with fresh connections to contemporary worship and devotional practices. Indulge in the biblical study of the Psalms from a scholar and former pastor. Letting Sandra do the “heavy lifting” of research and translation allows you to experience the Bible in a deeply sensitive way, answering the evergreen question, “so what does this have to do with me today?”

If you would like to take this study with us please contact Donna Hyde at Donna-hyde@att.net or 832-457-2279. Watch for further notification on where the study will meet on Wed.’s from 1-3pm. Hope you can join us.



Giving for His Glory

NOVEMBER 2023 FINANCE

Church

*Giving:	\$ 17,886.57
Castaway's:	\$ 10,000.00
Total Income:	\$ 27,886.57
Total Expenses	<u>-\$ 33,973.19</u>
Nov Net Income(Loss)	<u>-\$ 6,086.62</u>

**Identified giving, Sunday School offerings and unidentified-giving (cash received when we pass the offering plates).*

First Learning Tree

Income/Tuition	\$107,883.08
Regular Expenses	<u>-\$92,010.56</u>
Grant Applied	<u>\$55,830.30</u>
Nov Net Income(Loss)	\$71,702.82

Church & FLT Combined through November **Year-to-date Net Income(Loss) -71,211.69**

If you are traveling please consider going to our church website to give online at www.fumcrookport.org.

*Thank you for participating in the work for Christ!
Your gifts are honored and you are blessed by celebrating the gifts you have been given. Please contact the church office if you have any questions in regards to Stewardship or your offerings.*

Blessings,

Patty Impens



CASTAWAYS METHODIST VOLUNTEERS

THANK YOU UNITED Methodist Volunteers!!
Your hard work and commitment are a huge support to the ministries of FUMC Rockport...help by joining this team and be blessed as you work together for God!

November 2023

Sales Total	\$ 17,268.36
Admin Fee to Castaways	<u>-\$ 2,398.85</u>
Total deposit to FUMC	<u>\$14,869.51</u>

These funds were distributed as follows:

\$10,000.00 to the FUMC General Fund
\$2,973.91 to the Castaways Volunteers Mission Fund
\$1,895.60 to the FUMC Capital Reserve Fund

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR CASTAWAYS VOLUNTEERS!!

2023 BENEVOLENT BUCKET OFFERINGS

January	Wesley Health Nurse	120.00
February	Community Table	100.00
March	UMCOR Relief Fund	824.00
April	FUMC Rockport Emergency Assistance Fund	1,100.00
May	Native American Ministries Month	140.00
June	Peace with Justice Sunday	140.00
July	Undie Sunday	3,175.05
August	Rockport-Fulton Good Samaritans	210.00
September	UM Student Day	140.00
October	World Communion	20.00
November	Harvest Sunday (Hunger)	0.00
December	UM Children's Home	0.00



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WORSHIP SCHEDULE

SUNDAYS:

- 8:00am Contemporary Worship Service—Communion Every Sunday
- 9:15am Small Group Studies
- 10:45am Traditional Worship Service - Communion Monthly on First Sundays



Serving the Rockport Community since 1870

- www.fumcrookport.org/worship
- Facebook: First United Methodist Church Rockport Tx
- Instagram: FUMCrockport

PRAYER:

- PRAYER REQUESTS can be sent to www.fumcrookport.org/prayer

SMALL GROUP AND BIBLE STUDIES:

Sun: Cross Talk, 9:15am, Rec Room

Truth Seekers 9:15am, Fellowship Hall

Children & Youth 9:15, Classroom next to Nursery

Mon: Disciple #1 with Maggie Allen, 10:00am starting September 18th

Disciple #2 with Stephanie Clark, 1:00-3:00pm, Rec Room Starting end of September

Wed: Women In the Word Bible Study Wednesdays, 1:00-3:00pm, FH 2 & 3 Starting September 20th

Lively Bible Study, 4:30 pm, Starts September 6th

Thu: The Thursday Disciple Group 1:00 pm, Banner Room Starts in November

Sign up for Small Group Bible Studies @ www.fumcrookport.org/bible-study



GIVING:

- Give online at fumcrookport.org/give
- Mail to PO Box 1045, Rockport TX 78381

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FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER DEADLINE IS MONDAY JANUARY 15TH

HAS GOD DONE SOMETHING AMAZING IN YOUR LIFE?

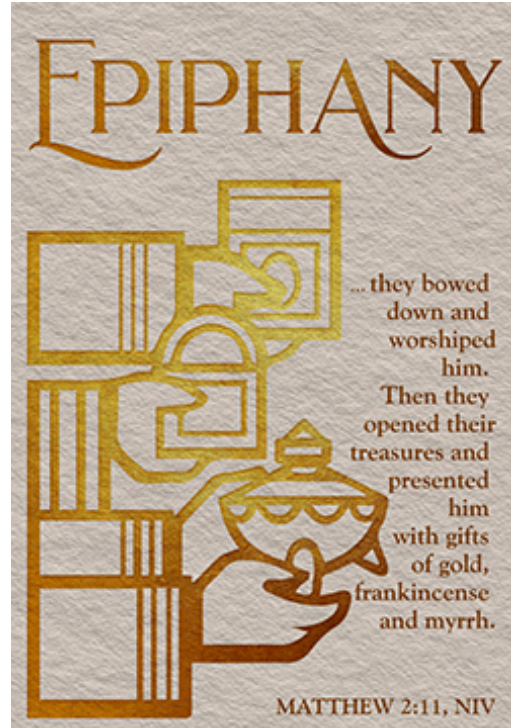

Others would benefit from reading about it—You can share your testimony in the newsletter!

Email to: admin@fumcrockport.org

HIRING
Someone who...

- LOVES JESUS
- LOVES CHILDREN
- MOTIVATED
- 18+ YEARS OLD

EMAIL
CHILDRENANDYOUTH
@FUMCROCKPORT.ORG
FOR MORE INFORMATION



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