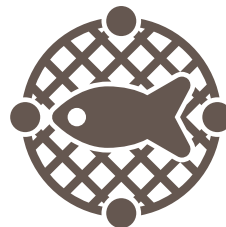




# THE FISHNET

ZACHARY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2024 | NO.2



## FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

My life is full of so many blessings. One of those blessings is a group of Methodist Pastors who I get to share life with on a regular basis. I am a part of a program called APL (Advancing Pastoral Leadership) through the Texas Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. We gather in various places across the country regularly to learn from one another and other communities of faith innovative and creative ways to live out our unique callings from God. We are from Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Oregon, and Arkansas - we serve rural, suburban, urban, and (yes) even coffee-shop churches. Recently, we gathered in Atlanta to understand more about how movements begin, sustain, and create societal change. We began our week at the historic Ebenezer Baptist Church, where Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. served as co-pastor. We toured Atlanta First UMC and Neighborhood Church, who are both living out their unique callings in their context in beautiful ways. There was so much to learn from these amazing pastors and communities, but one phrase has continued to live with me since I arrived back in Zachary just a few weeks ago: ***"Dream dreams that are so big that, without God, they will fail."***



We are a dreaming people. We dream about a better world for ourselves and our children. We dream about a world that isn't ruled by the most powerful "king" of the day, but instead is ruled by the King of Kings. We dream of equity, equality, and inclusion for those on the margins. We dream of transformed lives and communities, for God's glory.

**Continued on pg. 2**

# FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK (CONTINUED)

In our journey together I am going to continue asking you to dream - dream about our church's future, dream about our community and how our congregation can be a church in the heart of our community. But know this - dreams can be dangerous and they can be risky. The freedom to dream big dreams also requires the faith and fortitude to fail (and try again). Along our journey I am going to ask this congregation not only to dream big dreams, but also step out in faith into the wild, wondrous dream of God. It will be difficult, it will require us to leave some things behind, but it will also be amazing, surprising, and Spirit-led. Here are a few questions I'd like to ask you to pray about as we continue to do life and ministry together:

- **What dreams do you have for your church?**
- **What are the greatest needs you see in our local community?**
- **In the next five years, what are you hoping to see our church accomplish?**
- **Is there anything we should leave behind in order to be successful?**
- **What do you believe is God's vision for Zachary United Methodist Church?**
- **(and lastly) How do you see yourself in the dream?**

What a gift it is to be your pastor. I am extremely blessed.

In Christ,

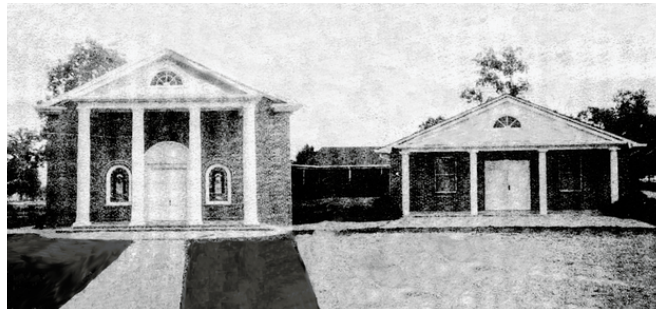
*Rev. Austin*

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## FROM THE ARCHIVES

Have you ever wondered what the original 1949 Sanctuary looked like? In 1954, to serve the growing congregation's need for social, food service space, and Sunday School classrooms, it built an Educational Building.

Today, it houses the Youth Building, the Music Suite, and the Heritage Room. You will see that today's Youth Building is designed in the image of the third Sanctuary, which is part of our current church.



# STUDENT MINISTRIES

## WEEKLY YOUTH IS BACK! SUNDAYS 4-6PM

Youth group programming has officially started! I know that is music to everyone at ZUMC's ears.

Our youth group (7th-12th grade) have begun meeting from 4-6 pm in the Youth Building, where they have fellowship, a Bible lesson, and games. These gatherings are always a special time where our students can have a safe place to be themselves and build community with others.

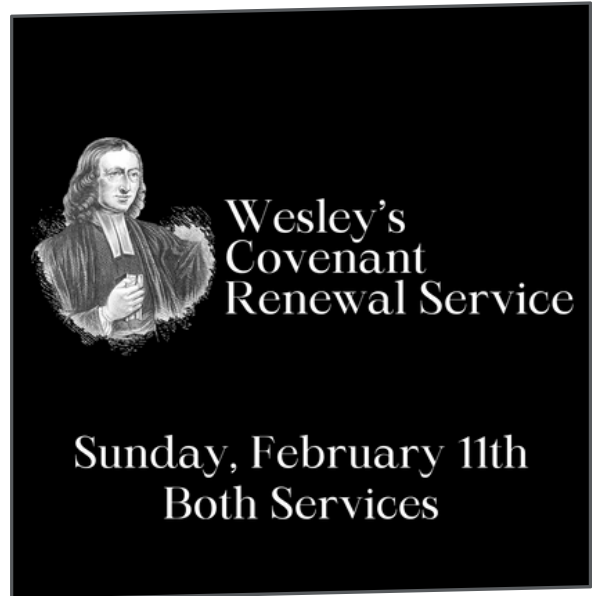
We are also looking forward to reporting back on our Super Bowl Party on February 11th and the annual CONNECT Conference where our high schoolers will have the opportunity to worship alongside others from local UMC churches.

Make sure to help us get the word out that we are back in the swing of things!



***“Get the word out. Teach all these things. And don’t let anyone put you down because you’re young. Teach believers with your life: by word, by demeanor, by love, by faith, by integrity. Stay at your post reading Scripture, giving counsel, teaching. And that special gift of ministry you were given when the leaders of the church laid hands on you and prayed—keep that dusted off and in use.” 1 Timothy 4:11-14 (MSG)***

# UPCOMING EVENTS



# YEAR-END FINANCIAL REPORT

The Finance Committee and the newly elected Treasurer faced the beginning of 2023 with a financial picture that reflected that our expenses were \$45,000 above our income at the end of 2022. As we reported to you in January of 2023, significant measures were necessary to establish a balanced budget for the church. You steadfastly supported the difficult financial journey of 2023. We needed to enter 2024 in a position of financial stability poised to commit to the initiation of meaningful programs of worship and ministry for our children and our youth.

We are pleased to report that, as a church empowered by the Holy Spirit to overcome the financial obstacle that had been placed in our path, we have concluded our 2023 financial year with inspiring news. We have fully funded our reserves with the equivalent of one month's operations (\$45,000). We have realized a 2023 surplus of approximately \$20,000, which can be applied this year to the development of our children's and youth programs. Both ranking high in our church's priorities.

We begin 2024 with a balanced budget projection of \$542,000. This is \$56,000 higher than our 2023 budget of \$486,000 and reflects initial funding of our newly appointed Director of Student Ministries and necessary supplies and support for the initiation of these programs. The continued Spirit-led growth of your financial support will help assure the successful launch of these programs.

As we have in the past, we will communicate with you every 3 months, or more frequently as the need may arise, to keep you informed as to our financial condition.

Thank you and God Bless -

Richard Stalder, Chair of Finance Committee

Myrna Rabalais, Treasurer

***“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.  
For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”***

***Matthew 6:19-21***



# MEN'S WALK | FEBRUARY 22ND-25TH

Would you like to strengthen your spiritual life and more deeply dedicate your life to Christ? Walk to Emmaus is a three-day experience which takes a New Testament look at Christianity as a lifestyle. It is a highly structured weekend designed to strengthen and renew the faith of Christian people, and through them their families, congregations, and the world in which they live. Emmaus is a combined effort of laity and clergy toward the renewal of the church.



## WALK TO EMMAUS

For more information or to register for the Men's Walk, call Ginger Hughes at 225-603-2748.

**Deadline to apply is February 5th.**

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## CHANCEL CHOIR EASTER CANTATA

Greetings from the ZUMC Chancel Choir! We are so excited to bring to you our 2024 Easter Cantata, "O, What A Savior". I wanted this to be my first Easter Cantata at ZUMC back in 2020. Unfortunately, the pandemic prevented the performance from taking place so, again, we're excited to bring this work to our congregation and community.

"O, What A Savior" is a powerful and heartfelt series of works that focuses on the theme of salvation through Jesus Christ. These songs celebrate the sacrifice and redemption provided by Jesus on the cross.

The lyrics of "O, What A Savior" emphasize the significance of Jesus' death and resurrection as the ultimate act of love and salvation. It highlights the depth of God's grace and mercy, acknowledging that Jesus willingly laid down His life to save humanity from sin and offer eternal life.

The cantata combines elements of worship, praise, and reflection, inviting listeners to contemplate the profound impact of Jesus' sacrifice. It encourages believers to respond with gratitude and adoration, recognizing Jesus as the Savior who brings hope, forgiveness, and transformation.

Our performance will take place in the ZUMC Sanctuary on Palm Sunday (March 24, 2024) at 9:00 AM. We hope to see you in the pews for what will be an amazing time of worship!



## EASTER SERIES: “LIVING IN A POST RESURRECTION WORLD”

One of the central messages of the Christian faith that is most often overlooked is that Christ is present in and through all things, which means that everything is sacred and every moment is holy. From Easter to Pentecost, we will explore the good news that Christ is risen - not just physically from the grave some two thousand years ago but in every aspect of our lives and world - and how to live in awe of the mundane moments of ordinary lives. This series begins with focusing on the resurrection of Jesus, a single person, and leads us to Pentecost, where we understand the way in which the entire faith community and indeed the world is resurrected in the Spirit of Christ.

### **\*TENTATIVE\* HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE**

PALM SUNDAY - MARCH 24TH

POTLUCK AND EGG HUNT FOLLOWING 11AM SERVICE

MAUNDY THURSDAY - MARCH 28TH

6PM - ZACHARY UMC

GOOD FRIDAY - MARCH 29TH

6PM - BLACKWATER UMC - “THE LAST WORDS OF CHRIST”



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