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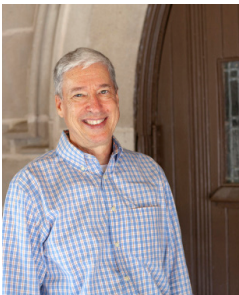


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Pastor's Message

I want to thank all of you for an amazing Christmas season. Even in the midst of a pandemic there were so many places and ways that the love of God was visible from our church and in our community! I am thankful for the innovative ways we all shared with family, friends, and those around us.

Christmas Eve is an incredible moment for me and this year, while different, was still great. Lenee, Bailey and I were able to sit together and worship on Christmas Eve. And all over the world, in our homes, we heard again the story of Jesus' birth, we watched the darkened sanctuary brighten as we share the light from our candles and sing Silent Night. And



Rev. Dr. Jeff McDonald
Senior Pastor

then we made a commitment to carry that light into the world.

Not long ago someone shared with me a poem by Howard Thurman. I think it is a great perspective for us

as we head into the new year:

*When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back to their flock,*

The work of Christmas begins:

*To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoners,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace for all
To make music in the heart.*

Let's get to work!

Peace,
Rev. Dr. Jeff McDonald
Senior Pastor

Epiphany Services: Sunday and Wednesday

The Epiphany Sunday services will be provided by Laurel Heights United Methodist Church in San Antonio. These services will be provided at the usual times of 8:30, 9:45, and 11 am via the usual means — streaming or YouTube — through the usual source: www.stpaulshouston.org/stream.

This is the continuation of a reciprocal arrangement between St. Paul's and Laurel Heights in order to give each church's clergy and staff a brief break.

St. Paul's Choir will lead an Epiphany Day service on Wednesday, January 6, at 7 pm. This will be in Evening Prayer format, and Rev. Dr. Jeff McDonald will delivery a brief homily. Access this service in Zoom through this webpage: www.stpaulshouston.org/worship. Scroll down the page to the appropriate icon.



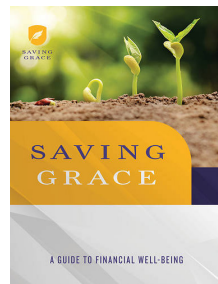
from *Herod with the Three Kings*, a 15th fresco on the vaulted ceiling of the Saint-Gonéry Chapel, Plougrescant, France

Children's Ministries is also planning Epiphany celebrations for individual classes in a manner that can be done at home via Zoom. To ensure receiving the Dropbox folder with ideas, email Rev. Kate Flint via kflint@stpaulshouston.org.

New Years Resolution 2: Financial Well Being

For many people, New Year's Resolution 1 is *Health and Well-Being*, both physical and spiritual, with Resolution 2 as establish *Financial Well-Being*.

Jesus speaks more about money than any other topic in the Gospels, more than prayer, faith, or love. How do we, as people of faith, create healthy relationships with money and possessions?



A money management workshop based on the Cokesbury series *Saving Grace: A Guide to Financial Well-Being* will be provided by St. Paul's for six weeks, starting January 10, from 5 to 6:30 pm via Zoom. The workshop will be led by members of the St. Paul's Generosity Team. Register via www.stpaulshouston.org/event/saving-grace. The \$15 workshop materials will be distributed in early January. Participants

are asked to allow at least a week for advanced preparation.

Adapted from the best-selling *Freed-up Financial Living* curriculum from Good Sense, *Saving Grace* provides the tools to address the topics of saving, earning, giving, spending, and debt, along with helpful strategies for achieving a sustainable financial life. This study is based on Wesleyan values and helps participants to reach personal financial goals as well as address life concerns. Components include interviews with financial experts; and a 40-day devotional.

As a follow up to this study, in late February St. Paul's Methodist Foundation will sponsor *Putting Your House in Order*, an end-of-life planning workshop, led by Leah Taylor of the Texas Methodist Foundation. Those who complete *Saving Grace* may attend *Putting Your House in Order* at no charge.

JOY TO THE WORLD



This year, St. Paul's many wonderful Christmas celebrations and traditions were rolled into one enchanting, outdoor event. On Sunday, December 20, we walked in small groups around the St. Paul's campus to immerse ourselves in the lessons and carols of Christmas. From the prophecies of Isaiah and the visit of the Angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary, we traveled with Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem, sang with the angels, watched the sheep, witnessed the Wise Men bearing gifts, and ended with a brief candlelit meditation in the Sanctuary. Following this walking service, the youth served refreshments in the Fannin Street Courtyard. Two more pictures are on page 6.

Join us Online for our

Town Hall Meetings

Sunday, January 17 at 4 pm &
Tuesday, January 19 at 7 pm

Rev. Jeff will share updates about the church and our 2021 budget.

Register by visiting www.stpaulshouston.org/events and selecting your preferred date!



In the next Town Hall meetings, the congregation will have the opportunity to see how St. Paul's resources are prioritized and being used. Senior Pastor Rev. Dr. Jeff McDonald will present the budget, and copies of the budget will be made available in advance to everyone who registers for either Town Hall. An opportunity for questions and answers will be provided.

These Town Hall meetings will be on Sunday, January 17, at 4 pm and Tuesday, January 19, at 7 pm.

Register to virtually attend one of these meetings via this webpage: www.stpaulshouston.org/events/town-hall-jan-17-19

St. Paul's TeleMedicine Clinic serving Emergency Aid Coalition clients in Abraham Station and operated in conjunction with the University of Houston College of Nursing starts early this year. For more information: awolfe@stpaulshouston.org.

The next Pastors Bible Study webinar series will begin on January 20. The content will be announced and study open for registration on January 7. Watch for it in the *Chimes* or the church website at www.stpaulshouston.org/study.

Conversation: *Healthcare Access*

The second installment of the Missions Cohort for Racial Justice will be Sunday, January 31, at 2pm on Zoom.

As we seek to work for a more just world, we will learn about healthcare access for undocumented immigrants and Black Americans and how we can serve in St. Paul's new telemedicine clinic. (See below left and page 8 of the December *St. Paul's Monthly* about the clinic.)

A link to the conversation will be provided via the *Chimes* and the website. Address questions about this cohort to Rev. Paul Richards Kuan via prichards-kuan@stpaulshouston.org and about the clinic to Rev. Andrew Wolfe via awolfe@stpaulshouston.org.

Who to Contact

To reach any staff, call 712-528-0527 or email info@stpaulshouston.org, and your message will be forwarded.

To update membership records, including telephone numbers and email addresses, please contact Nina Hall via nina@stpaulshouston.org.

To schedule a funeral or notify the church of births, deaths, hospitalizations, or other concerns, please contact Nina Hall via nina@stpaulshouston.org.

To schedule a baptism or order altar flowers, please contact Dawn Uebelhart via dawn@stpaulshouston.org.

To schedule a wedding, please contact Betty Rennell via bettyrennell@gmail.com.

St. Paul's Family

New Members. Welcome Marilyn and Dave Estes and Samantha (Sam) and Frank Malina with Madeline and Elizabeth, who joined St. Paul's Family on December 20, 2020.

Baptisms. Taylor and Adam Alonso presented their daughter, Amelia (Mila), born December 3, 2019, for the Sacrament of Holy Baptism on December 6, 2020. The congregation will have the opportunity to welcome her into the Community of Faith during the online worship service on December 13, 2020.

Deaths. Deepest sympathy to Janice McNeil on the death of her husband, Robert Irving (Bob) McNeil, III, who died on May 29, 2020.



Marilyn and Dave Estes

Deepest sympathy to Carol Hutchens on the death of her husband, Richard Hutchens, who died December 4, 2020.

Deepest sympathy to Shirley and Larry Roberts on the death of Larry's brother, Rickey Roberts, who died Wednesday, December 16, 2020.



Samantha (Sam) and Frank Malina with Madeline and Elizabeth

Deepest sympathy to Jenna and Brandon Lloyd and their family on the death of Jenna's mother, Sue Jones, who died December 19, 2020.

Deepest sympathy to the friends of Loyce Baker, who died on December 24, 2020.



With deep gratitude the sisters and brothers of our St. Paul's Fe y Esperanza community have received the tangible expressions of love and solidarity shared with them by so many. Some pictured above. It is amazing! Your most generous Christmas donations of cash, gift cards, professional services, computer laptops and tablets, and other gifts has been so significant in making a real difference at this critical times in the lives of many children and adults.

Many have been blessed with whom we stand in support of Fe y Esperanza — Faith and Hope. *¡Gracias! ¡Gracias! ¡Gracias!*

In Christ's love,
Rev. Nataly J. Negrete López



The December Recovery Team prepares to jack up a pier-and-beam house to replace one of the supporting beams that was rotting. St. Paul's is part of The Restoration Team, a network of Houston congregations dedicated to assisting families whose homes were damaged from flooding during Hurricane Harvey in 2017 — and beyond. For more information about future work days, email Rev. Paul Richards-Kuan via prichards-kuan@stpaulshouston.org.

Thanks from the EAC

Despite the challenges of 2020, thanks to the generosity of many individuals in and beyond the Emergency Aid Coalition's supporting congregations, the EAC was able to help many of Houston's families and individuals in need. Because of you, EAC Clients have been given warmth, sustenance, human kindness and hope for the future, even in the midst of profound uncertainty.



Above: St. Paul's School children deliver toys collected through a toy drive. The school also delivered a couple of barrels of groceries from a food drive. Below: St. Paul's member Rob Phillips and Clear Springs High School Students donated warm socks. Not pictured: St. Paul's Choral Scholars who presented the annual benefit recital for the EAC this fall — virtually.



Ordinary Life Women Take Chickens and Toys to Boynton Chapel UMC



Acting on one of the group's three purposes — to participate in charitable activities as a group — the Ordinary Life Women collected and delivered 120 Costco cooked chickens and 140 H-E-B frozen chickens to Boynton Chapel UMC in the Third Ward. This effort was organized by the women with financial support from the Ordinary Life finance committee. In addition, the women donated money, shopped, and wrapped presents for Boynton chapel's Christmas Angel. Above: Patsy Howard, Marcy Boyd, and Frieda Hale move the frozen chickens from store to transport during the pouring rain of Saturday, December 19.



St. Paul's Fe y Esperanza community celebrates Las Posadas (The Inns) to commemorate the journey (left) that Mary and Joseph (right) made to Bethlehem and their search for lodging where Mary could give birth to the baby Jesus, ultimately finding shelter in a stable. Celebrated in Mexico and parts of the United States from December 16 to 24, this festival usually concludes with a worship service and party.

The CARES Act Deduction Allowances

The CARES Act allows all taxpayers to take a charitable deduction of up to \$300, even if you do not itemize. Simply, if you donated up to \$300 in cash by midnight of December 31, 2020, to a qualified charitable organization, like St. Paul's UMC, your adjusted gross income (AGI) will be reduced by up to \$300 — and you can still claim the standard deduction.

For those who do itemize their deductions, the new law allows for cash contributions to qualified charities such as St. Paul's to be deducted up to 100 percent of AGI, up from the previous 60 percent.

The CARES Act also waived the required minimum distribution (RMD) rules for individual retirement accounts (IRAs) — but only for 2020. Nonetheless, IRA owners over age 70½ can still give up to \$100,000 directly from their IRA to St. Paul's and pay no tax on the distribution.

And, for those 70½* and older, as every year, Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCD) from their IRAs in 2020 made directly to a qualified charity such as St. Paul's count as part of an RMD. Since this is a charitable donation, no additional income is recognized, the tax liability on the RMD is reduced, and one may still take the standard deduction when filing taxes. Some restrictions do apply to these distributions, so check with your tax advisor.

**While the age for RMD's was raised to 72 ½ on January 1, 2020, the age for QCD's remains 70 ½.*

ST. PAUL'S
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
HOUSTON

HEALING CIRCLE for GRIEF & LOSS

—Facilitated by Helen Spaw —

Thursdays: January 7 & 21, February 4 & 18, and March 4
Noon to 1 pm via Zoom
To connect or learn more, email hspaw@stpaulshouston.org

A new Healing Circle for Grief & Loss will begin Thursday, January 7, from noon to 1 pm via Zoom, continuing on the first and third Thursdays of the month until March 4. For more information or to connect, email Helen Spaw via hspaw@stpaulshouston.org

The idea behind Healing Circles is that humans heal in community. The earliest humans gathered around a campfire and shared stories. Healing Circles brings this healing community back into our lives with a format that allows us to explore our healing and experience our wholeness.

St. Paul's conducts healing circles on a variety of concerns, as needed. Current ongoing circles are for single moms and the healing of racism. See below.

ST. PAUL'S
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
HOUSTON

ST. PAUL'S SINGLE MOMS CIRCLE

2nd and 4th Tuesdays
at 8:30 pm via Zoom

For more information, contact Helen at
hspaw@stpaulshouston.org

ST. PAUL'S
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
HOUSTON

Healing of Racism Circle

*Healing Art Circle in conjunction with
the Center for the Healing of Racism*

...

2nd Thursdays from 10-11:30 am
via Zoom

Email Helen via
hspaw@stpaulshouston.org

Fine Arts Academy Term Begins January 11; Cello Lessons Added

Individual lessons in piano, voice, cello and visual art for students with special needs will be offered this spring term by the Fine Arts Academy (FAA), beginning Monday, January 11. All classes will be online until further notice.



In addition to these classes, in introduction to the cello will be presented via Zoom on Saturday, January 9, from 10 to 10:30 pm.

To connect, email hspaw@stpaulshouston.org

The cello classes will be taught on Thursdays, from 4:30 to 5 pm by a new teacher to the academy — David Dietz. Currently pursuing

a master's degree at Rice University's Shepherd School of Music, Dietz earned his bachelor's degree and performer diploma at Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music. He has performed a variety of organizations and music festivals, garnering numerous accolades. Raised by two music educators, Dietz has held a private cello studio for the past 10 years, teaching young children to aspiring professionals to amateur adult students.

Continuing FAA instructors are Ginger Anderson, piano; Alicia Gianni, voice; and Helen Spaw, visual art. For more information about them as well as online registration, please go to www.stpaulshouston.org/fine-arts-academy.

Tutors Needed

Can you tutor or mentor a MacGregor Elementary student via Zoom? From encouragement to homework help, volunteers are connecting with students virtually to continue our mission of supporting children in our community. For more information, contact Bob Mahlstedt via Rmahlst488@aol.com

YOUTH JANUARY SCHEDULE

The Youth will begin 2021 with an Epiphany Celebration on Sunday, January 3, at 10 am via Zoom. The remaining January weekly schedule follows. Youth contacts: Tiffin, tiffin@stpaulshouston.org or Oksana, oksana@stpaulshouston.org.

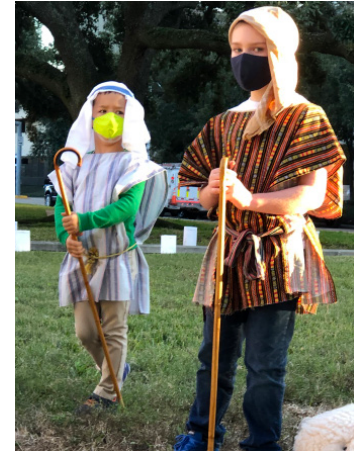
Sundays: Sunday School. 10 am via Zoom, resuming January 10

Tuesdays: Girls Bible Study. 6:30 pm on the outdoor Labyrinth, resuming January 12. Bring blanket or chair.

Wednesdays: H.O.T. (Hang Out Time). 7 pm via Zoom, resuming January 6.

Confirmation

A Confirmation class for this year's 6th graders will begin in January. To ensure receiving updates from the Youth Department about the schedule and related matters, please email Kat Denton via kat@stpaulshouston.org.



A few of our *Joy to the World!* angels and shepherds. For more *Joy to the World!* pictures, see page 2.

WEEKLY CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

Stay in touch via the St. Paul's Kids Facebook page (www.facebook.com/KidsOfSPUMC) and the St. Paul's Kids & Families e-letter. To ensure receiving the e-letter, contact Rev. Kate Flint via kflint@stpaulshouston.org. Also contact her for GROW and Joyful Noise Zoom connections.

Children's Sunday School: Age 3 through 5th grade meet on Zoom 9:45-10:45 AM for Joyful Noise and GROW assemblies followed by age-level groups. Children's Ministry e-letter has Zoom links. For details: Rev. Kate Flint via kflint@stpaulshouston.org.

St. Paul's Moms: Resumes Monday, January 11, at 8 pm via Zoom, continuing 2nd and 4th Mondays with a book study to enrich moms' spiritual lives.

Children's Choirs: To register your child for choir: www.stpaulshouston.org/childrenschoirs. The day-by-day children's schedule follows:

Children's Choirs:

- **Wesley Singers** (Grades 1-2). Sundays at 2 pm, resuming January 10.
- **Choristers** (Grades 3-8). Sundays at 2:45 pm, resuming January 10.
- **Treble Choir.** Wednesdays at 5:30 pm, resuming January 6, in Sanctuary or via Zoom. For each week's location, maintain contact with Anna Teagarden via ateagarden@stpaulshouston.org.
- **One-on-One Voice for Life lessons.** Contact ateagarden@stpaulshouston.org



CORNERSTONE society

OF ST. PAUL'S FOUNDATION

The St. Paul's Methodist Foundation of Houston is excited to welcome the following members to the Cornerstone Society, bringing the total membership to 112. These new members are

Sharon Ainsworth
Sandy and Jim Bankston
Jennifer and Emil Fernandez
Jaime Flores
Linda and Dicky Hall
Beverly and Kimball McMahan and
Melinda
Natasha Nightengale
Karyn and Paul Richards-Kuan
Bob Weylandt
Brenda and Randy Wright

The Cornerstone Society is an annual giving program that supports the primary purpose of the St. Paul's Foundation — to provide for the care of the buildings and facilities of the church campus — while also offering members the opportunity to aid social service agencies.

Half of the annual gifts to the Cornerstone Society will be dedicated to the Building and Facilities Fund. The balance will be directed to a non-profit voted on by members of the Society, based on grant applications to the Foundation.

Membership is open to individuals, couples, and families. We welcome new members at any time.

For more information, please contact Mary Linda Portner via mlportner@stpaulshouston.org or visit www.stpaulshouston.org/st-pauls-foundation.

To receive the *Chimes* weekly e-letter, email dadair@stpaulshouston.org

Amazing Place Adding Opportunities

Until able to resume live programming, Amazing Place provides virtual options for individuals and families living with dementia. Two new opportunities are being added this spring, dates to be determined. These are

Aging Solo. This six-session series of is being designed for seniors who live alone. It will provide practical advice plus a support group.

Dementia Training for Home Health Aides. This two-session training is encouraged for all home health aides who work with patients with dementia
Other Programs.

Described in more detail at www.amazingplacehouston.org/updated-services, the January offerings include:

Savvy Caregiver. This free six-week series especially for persons caring for someone dealing with dementia help caregivers understand dementia and its effects on behavior and provide personalized strategies for caregiving and related decision making. Two series begin in January: Tuesdays from 10 am to noon, starting January 5, and Thursdays from 11 am to 1 pm, starting January 7. To register, contact Sharon Cantrell via scantrell@amazing-placehouston.org.

Memory Training. This \$40 four-week class is designed to learn techniques and strategies to improve memory. The next series will be on Wednesdays from 10 to 11:30 am, starting January 6. Not intended for people with a diagnosis of dementia. To register, contact Sally Davis via sdavis@amazingplacehouston.org.

Memory Preservation Nutrition^(R) Meals. This carryout and delivery meal service is the solution for easy, delicious, brain-healthy nutrition — for anyone. See www.amazingplacehouston.org/updated-services/memory-preservation-nutrition-meals.

Other programs and training include a virtual activity program, dementia caregiver counseling

Foundation Scholarship Applications Available

Applications for the St. Paul's Methodist Foundation 2021-22 Scholarships are now available: www.stpaulshouston.org/foundation-scholarships.

To facilitate the process, the application has been streamlined, and all documentation may be completed on-line. Changes include allowing students to indicate eligibility for restricted funds, such as early childhood education, music, or seminary.

St. Paul's Methodist Foundation scholarships are awarded to high school seniors pursuing degrees in higher education and to students enrolled in college/university. Special consideration is given to members of St. Paul's and to students with affiliation with the United Methodist Church and the Texas Annual Conference.

The application deadline is February 13, 2021; scholarships will be awarded in mid-March 2021. Questions? Email foundation@stpaulshouston.org.



services, support groups, brain health matters presentations, and faith care connection.

Amazing Place is a day program for people with mild to moderate dementia that also trains and educates caregivers, congregations, health professionals, and the community to equip them with essential knowledge and tools.

St. Paul's members Renee Hawkins and Beth Wiggins are on the Board of Directors and Advisory Council, respectively. Lynn Schroth and Rev. Richard Pettys, Sr. are St. Paul's representatives to the Council of Congregations.

Looking Ahead

St. Paul's Community Mission Garden Ready to Start Growing



After much planning since the first Zoom meeting in August, the St. Paul's Community Mission Garden is ready for planting. Raised beds were designed, built, and installed by Kimberly and David Spaw into a fenced area on the Prospect Street side of the Jones Building, sharing space with the school's butterfly garden.

Realizing that, due to lack of sun, the initial goal of growing produce to provide for those in need would not work in the space available, the goal has been altered. Currently the plan is to grow herbs that do not require quite as much sun as vegetables and for those herbs to be sold at the church to raise money dedicated to the initial goal. It is possible that home gardeners among our members may contribute their own produce to these sales.



A portion of the beds will set aside for experimental purposes to determine if certain crops theoretically not appropriate for the space can grow there, and plans are for a small area at the edge of the parking lot that receives much sun to host a fruit tree and berry bushes or vines.

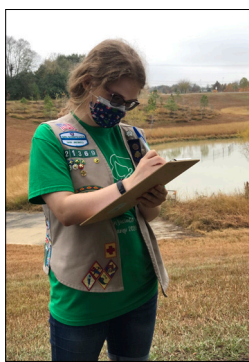
To learn more about this garden or to help plant and maintain it, please email Helen Spaw via hspaw@stpauls-houston.org. The next Zoom meeting will be on Friday, January 8, at 10:30 am.

In the pictures above, from left: Susie Vanlandingham prepares the base of the beds with thick cardboard, Bill Dana carries fresh, nutritious soil from the parking lot, and unidentified members of the Fe y Esperanza Community spread the soil.



Girl Scout Gold Award Project Adds Trees to Willow Waterhole Watershed

A familiar figure at St. Paul's in her choir robe, singing in the Treble choir or playing her violin in worship services, Madeline (Maddy) Vanlandingham, also is a player-coach for her soccer team and a Girl Scout in Troop 21359 working toward her Gold Award.



Maddy reviews plans

Only six percent of the Girl Scouts attain this highest honor, which, after several qualifying steps, requires completion of a project entailing a minimum of 80 hours.

Among the criteria are that the project make a lasting difference in the community and that it includes

community education and ensures sustainability.

Maddy identified the need for additional trees at the Willow Waterhole Watershed (www.willowwaterhole.org) near her neighborhood and enlisted St. Paul's member Bill Burhans, the Waterhole's Conservation Chair, as her advisor.

She planned and coordinated the delivery of 10 trees along with the needed soil amendments and staking and enlisted church friends, neighbors, and soccer-team friends to plant 10 trees, most located next to benches where



Emily Vanlandingham and Joan Wilsford dig in to plant a tree

they would eventually provide shade for those on the benches.

After Burhans led a demonstration of how to plant the trees, the group dispersed to plant at designated locations.

For education, Maddy is organizing a virtual presentation by a panel of air quality experts.

Among St. Paul's friends assisting with the planting were Tom Thrash and Grace and Joan Wilsford as well as her younger sisters, Emily and Sarah.

An honor student at the High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, Maddy is the daughter of Susie and Josh Vanlandingham.



Bill Burhans, project advisor