



# The Newsletter

*"Celebrating Christ, Community and Communion Every Sunday"*

6435 N. NEW BRAUNFELS AVENUE,  
Tel.: (210) 828-5728  
Church Office Email: [halamoheightsc@satx.rr.com](mailto:halamoheightsc@satx.rr.com)

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS 78209  
FAX (210) 828-5809  
Church Website: [www.AlamoHeightsCC.org](http://www.AlamoHeightsCC.org)

## JANUARY 2016



### 2016 Outreach Ministry Projects

The Outreach Committee has chosen to support the following for the 2016 year:

- 1 – AHCC Food Pantry (All Year)
  - 2 – Blanket Sunday (Church World Services – Father’s Day in June)
  - 3 – The 6 Disciples of Christ Special Offerings (Week of Compassion, Reconciliation, Easter, Pentecost, Thanksgiving and Christmas)
- Please remember these **3 Outreach Projects** when you are planning your giving to the Church through 2016.

### ~AHCC Food Pantry Blog~

When it comes to Hunger in America, there are several areas to consider. While there are many who go hungry (defined as five meals per week), there are twice as many who are “food insecure,” a condition of an household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food. The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) estimates approximately 20% of all US household have varying degrees of food insecurity (September 2015).

Hunger and food insecurity cost the United States as a nation much more than we may realize. In 2014, the most recent year for which we have data, the estimated health-related costs of hunger and food insecurity in the United States were a staggering \$160.07 billion.

Consider this: The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which has the goal of assisting Americans to purchase an adequate diet, is the largest of the Federal food and nutrition assistance programs and served more than 47 million Americans each month in fiscal 2013. Evidence shows that SNAP benefits help alleviate poverty and food insecurity

among participating households. SNAP participants value nutrition as much as other consumers, but their time and money constraints complicate the task of making healthy food choices, and some go back to “fast food” with its excess sodium, empty calories and refined grains as the answer.

These are staggering figures, but these statistics don’t have a face to them. At the AHCC Food Pantry we see individuals and families in need, and each has a face, a story to tell, and a sense of hope that food pantries such as ours continue for as long as there is hunger. So how did we do in 2015? Let’s look at the number of people we helped and at what financial costs.

For 2015, we saw 106 families, and average of 400 people a month. Our annual cost was \$14,400.00 (an average of \$1,200 per month). Our corporate support from Bird Bakery, Trader Joe’s, Panera Bread, and HEB Central Market is **“PRICELESS”** at **NO COST** to AHCC. On an average month, we received 7,000 pounds of support in the form of vegetables, fruits, bread, desserts and meats.

We all have the opportunity to help create positive change, but sometimes we start thinking, “I’m already really busy, and how much of a difference can I really make?” This is especially true when we’re talking about huge problems like world hunger or finding a cure for cancer, but it pops up all of the time in our everyday lives.

Can we save all the hungry in San Antonio? Not likely, I am afraid. But, we can be like the boy who was the starfish thrower and made a difference to each starfish he picked up from the beach and threw into the ocean. So when you catch yourself thinking that way, it helps to remember this story. You might not be able to change the entire world, but at least you can change a small part of it, for someone.





### **New Year's Resolutions**

Well, it is a new year. Happy New Year to all of you! Every year everyone talks about New Year's Resolutions. Several years ago I gave up New Year's Resolutions. Mostly because they were the same boring ones that everyone makes: lose weight, ask for a raise, work out more, etc. Not that those aren't good things to aim for, but you don't have to wait for January 1<sup>st</sup> to start a diet or work on getting more fit or ask the boss for a raise that you think you deserve.

I was talking on the phone with my Step-Mother, Betty, the other day. She is in the midst of dementia, unfortunately. My Father walked away from the phone so I was stuck talking to her for several minutes. The conversation was very circular and went like this on my end: "Yes, we are all doing well, no one is ill. How are you? The weather is cold now, it was hot the other day, but it is cold and rainy today. Is it cold there? Yes, I miss Pittsburgh and will probably come home sometime this year." And so it went, around and around and around. Finally, I asked where my Father was so I could say, "Good-bye". We have all had experiences with people with dementia like that. When I was visiting Pittsburgh, my Sister-in-law's Mother was also experiencing dementia and we had both Betty and her Mother over in the same day. It was a tough day.

What does that have to do with New Year's resolutions? Often we make resolutions to be better persons or to go to church more or to stop gossiping. I wondered when I was feeling frustrated with circular conversations, how God must feel when he sees us committing the same sins over and over and asking for forgiveness over and over again.

We are not alone. Paul talks about sinning and doing that which he most desires not to do again and again without being able to stop. Read Romans Chapter 8. The whole book of Romans speaks to me. Take time to read it.

When my Father-in-law had Alzheimer's Disease, we all dealt with circular conversations and some downright nonsense for many years. It was disheartening. You often wonder what, if anything gets through to the patient. Then I read somewhere that words don't really matter. Those with dementia may not understand logic or words, but when it comes down to it they do understand LOVE. A hug, a kiss, holding their hand, a smile, petting their hair, or rubbing their shoulders are all signs of affection that somehow get through. It is enough to calm them and all they really can carry with them.

When it comes down to our sins, God knew how to communicate with us when we wouldn't or couldn't listen. He loved us first before we loved Him. He sent His Son to die for us while we were yet demented. He broke the cycle of sin and the chains of death. Now that we understand the Gospel, meditate on it, feel it fully, **pass it on!** It changes lives.

In Christ's Love,  
Stephanie Blandford



As I am writing to you, we are all still in the rush of preparing for Christmas. So I must put that out of my mind and think of what we must look forward to in 2016. Can you believe it – 2016! I am struggling to accept that fact. However, at the same time, I am most grateful the Lord has allowed me and my loved ones to celebrate the New Year and I am sure you are, as well.

We all know that Alamo Heights Christian Church has been blessed over the years and has been a blessing to all of us, many, many times. We are all so fortunate to have this wonderful church to come to each week and to share with each other that love and appreciation of the church and the friendships and fellowships with one another.

In 2016, we must come together as Stewards' of this precious church and make some difficult decisions about the future of this church. We will all have different thoughts and ideas, but that is a good thing. I know that God is guiding us and will lead us to the right answer.

So, it is my hope and prayer that each of you will be blessed beyond any expectations for 2016! I pray that you have good health and know that God is with you in all that you do.

Linda Hawkins, Chair of Elders



### **"Serving by and in his Grace"**

The Deacons of Alamo Heights Christian Church (AHCC) will have their first meeting of the year on Sunday, January 10, 2016 @ 12:15 pm in the back of the Sanctuary. This is going to be a very important meeting for the Deacons. Everyone is excited to begin a new year. According to the calendar, the Ash Wednesday, Lent and Easter Season is early this year. The Deacons will be ready to serve!

Being the working hands and feet of Christ, we need to be the ones to do our best for AHCC. Let us all be in prayer regarding the coming year making our contributions worthy of Christ.

*It is our calling to be servants for the Father, students of the Son and candles in the dark.* This was pinned by our previous Deacon Chair. Let each of us be aware of what we are asked to do not just on Sunday mornings.



The Church Office needs to know when your Birthday or Wedding Anniversary is celebrated. Please call the Church Office 210-828-5728 and let Sarah know your information.

## Membership Information

At the beginning of each year, the Membership Committee asks everyone to update their contact and emergency information. This gives the Church Office and the Elders the most current information for each of the members. We want to include those who attend our Worship Services.

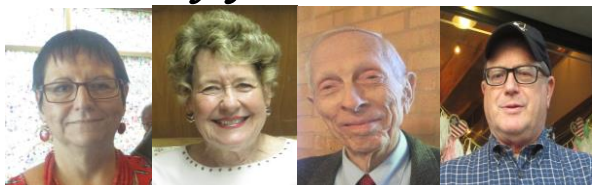
AHCC celebrates Birthdays and Anniversaries once a month. The celebrants have their picture taken so we know who they are and how much they have changed. The picture gallery begins below – the membership of AHCC seems to withstand the sands of time!

### **Anniversaries for December 2015**



Patty and Tommy Peyton celebrated their Wedding Anniversary during December.

### **Birthdays for December 2015**



Stephanie Blandford, Liz Jones, Dr. Gerald Pratt, and Joseph 'Jody' Warren celebrated their birthdays during the month of December.



## Up Coming Events

**Saturday, January 9, 2016**

**8:00 am –Elders Breakfast Meeting in Kirtley Hall**

**9:30 am – “UNDECORATING PARTY” – Volunteer to HELP take the Christmas Decorations down and store for next Christmas.**

**Sunday, January 10, 2016**

**12:15 pm –Deacon’s Meeting in the back of the Sanctuary**

**Sunday, January 17, 2016**

**12:15 pm – January’s Birthday/ Anniversary Celebration in Kirtley Hall**

**Thursday, January 21, 2016 – \*\*\*\*\*DEADLINE to submit articles or information for February’s Newsletter and Calendar\*\*\*\*\***



**Check the January’s Calendar for additional events taking place at AHCC.**

*The employees of  
Alamo Heights Christian Church  
would like to say*

## “Thank You”

*to the*

**Members of the Congregation  
who donated to the  
Employee Christmas Gift.**

*Your generosity is greatly appreciated!*