



The Newsletter

"Celebrating Christ, Community and Communion Every Sunday"

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Outreach Ministry Update

Special Offerings Update

2017 CWS-Crop Walk for Hunger excluded Rosemary Toland's name as turning in contributions to the Crop Walk this year. Our total remains the same - \$871.00.

The **Christmas Special Offering** received during December totaled \$275.00. This has been forwarded to the Disciples Mission Fund. This Special Offering will be returned to our Southwest Regional Office to be used in our region.

The **Heifer International Donations** given through out the year have totaled \$1,350.00. These monies will be used to purchase Ducks, Geese, Chicks, Rabbits, Goats, Lambs, Lamas, Fish, shares of Water Buffalo, Trees and Bees to be given through the out world. Each family who receives these animals or trees are taught how to raise them for food and to give part of their proceeds to the village where they live. Plus pass the gift to others when their herd grows. You feed a family for life by teaching them how to grow their own food that is part of their heritage.

~AHCC Food Pantry Blog~

The San Antonio Food Bank was founded in 1980, and serves one of the largest service areas in Southwest Texas. The Food Bank focus is for more than 58,000 individuals a week who will have food provided. Their Food Bank second mission is to educate these individuals about the resources to be food self-sufficient in the future.

By comparison, one of the newest food pantries is at UTSA.

The Roadrunner Pantry began as an idea between students, faculty, and staff at UTSA. The University Center, realizing the true need to provide the basic necessity of nutritious food to students struggling with food access and insecurity, and through rigorous

research of current higher education practices, established the Roadrunner Pantry.

Opening in March 2017, this new and important initiative supports the mission of serving students with food insufficiency. The University Center Food Pantry helps students by providing access to healthy and nutritious foods, on an "as needed" basis.

Relatively speaking, providing food on a weekly basis is easier than getting those folks in need to be self-sufficient.

Why is learning to be food self-sufficient so hard?

Consider this: Aside from housing and transportation, food is the single most expensive necessity that most families have to deal with. A recent USDA study indicates that the average monthly grocery cost for a family of four is somewhere between \$500 and \$700. This is far more than the cost of utilities like electricity and water in many instances.

December 2017 was a very busy month for the AHCC Food Pantry. On December 19, we served 35 families, a total of 187 individuals in just one day. The entire month ended on a positive note. We served a total of 104 families, with a total of 480 individuals through the month of December.

We have dedicated Volunteers who work week in and week out, without these Volunteers it would be hard to have such a Food Pantry to handle the number of families we have on a weekly basis.

We are thankful for the opportunity to serve, as Christ as taught us. Let us feed the Spirit as well as the Body.

Thank you, God for giving us the opportunity to spread our Outreach Ministry through our part of Texas. May we be your hands and feet doing this work to help feed others less fortunate. Amen!





**From the Pastor's
Corner . . .
Rev. Ed Palow**

HAPPY NEW YEAR WELCOME 2018



There's a story on the internet about an elderly woman who was told by her physician that she probably wouldn't live much longer. Soon thereafter, she called in her family to discuss her funeral arrangements. They talked about how the service would be, where she would be buried, what kind of casket would be used, etc. As the conversation was winding down, the woman remarked, "There's one thing that's very important; I want to be buried with a fork in my right hand." Her children were understandably puzzled by that remark, and one of them couldn't contain his curiosity. "Mom," he said, "what are you talking about?"

"I remember eating with my family when I was a young girl," the woman began, "Each of us would help clear away the dishes. Every once in a while, Mom would tell us, 'Save your fork!' We children knew what that meant. It meant that Mom had fixed us a pie or a cake or some sort of treat. When she said 'Save your fork!' that meant the best was yet to come. So, I want to be buried with a fork in my hand, for the best is yet to come!"

This is a lovely story, a beautiful illustration of hope. In Spanish, the word "esperar" means "hope," but it also means "wait." You wait for a bus, and you hope it's coming; the same word is used in both cases. It's the same in the biblical languages. Our hope is built around the expectation of something that is to come. We have hope because we know the best is yet to come. We have hope because we are waiting, waiting for our Lord to come back. **SO, SAVE YOUR FORK!**

New Year's Day came and went. Some of us made "Resolutions" (plans for change). How many of us have already failed on at least one of our resolutions? Change can be good, sometimes even needed, for new growth and rich fruit to follow.

More than once in the last month, our church secretary has said, "With all the changes happening lately..." and there have been some

changes lately! A revised Constitution and By-Laws was written and approved by and for our Church. The size of the General Board of our church has shrunk as some of our Elders' and Deacons' term of office expired and were not replaced. Considering the number of our membership has dropped, we should be able to do quite well with a smaller board. Since all appointed committee chair terms ends with the end of the calendar year, new chair persons will be appointed to replace the outgoing ones. With so many leadership changes, there may be occasional glitches. Let's be patient and supportive of our new leaders as they learn their tasks. Many of the tasks they will be doing have been done by our secretary who works too hard and much too long trying to do so many tasks that others should have been doing. Since our secretary was not hired to do those tasks, perhaps she can return to doing secretarial work in less hours each week.

Let us look forward to this year (2018). **LET'S SAVE OUR FORK** as we strive to be spiritually, physically, and numerically blessed by God to be pleasing to Him.

Let God Bless you.
Pastor Ed



**From the Retired
Chair of the Elders
Jody Warren**

What Does It take to Be An ELDER?

The definition of an "elder" is found in several places in the Bible (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Ephesians 4:11-13). I consider first that Elders are shepherds.

Both the Old and New Testaments repeatedly employ the metaphor of "shepherding" to describe the spiritual leadership of God's people. Not surprisingly, the New Testament views elders as shepherds as well. The elders' mission is to lead, teach, protect and love their church members the way shepherds care for the sheep in a flock, so that the church members will grow up into spiritual maturity.

In some readings, paid preachers are called "pastors" and lay leaders "elders." I believe that there is more to this notion.

I see a pastor is an elder, and an elder is a pastor. Elders should do those things in a local church that they assume a pastor would do, even if they spend fewer hours per week than the paid pastor.

But, Elders are not more than what the Bible says. Jesus is the Chief Shepherd, and elders are merely his temporary helpers (1 Peter 5:4). At their best, elders

model Jesus' character, teach Jesus' word, and lead the church by pointing it toward Jesus and his mission. Good elders never lose that awareness that they themselves are still sheep, utterly dependent on the grace of the Good Shepherd.

Who is the best Elder you have known? I'd like to nominate the late Rev. Ava Lee Helms, who died in December 2016. Now this nomination of a woman as an Elder is tough for some, and male-only eldership is a hotly contested issue. Why would I "pick" Ava Lee?

Known as "Sweetness," Ava Lee had a love and deep concern for all around her. She was especially fond of her "flock," the young and the elderly. She was a very good example of the love of Christ personified. In her own way, she was a strong, independent woman, who had a way of disarming conflicts among others, and looking for the good in all of God's people.

When asked why she WANTED to come to church, Ava Lee said: "Going to church is not only good for the soul, it can also stop you dying young." Although she was "older" Ava Lee was always young in spirit. She lived the thoughts of Rev. George Appleton, who taught that optimism and a sense of community can combat the effects of stress and depression, resulting in longer life in Christ.

Strong words for a strong woman. That's my Sweetness!

Praise the Lord, and have a Blessed Day!

Joseph B. Warren
Elder Retired

Membership Information

The church office received word that Mel Knibe passed away earlier this year. His daughter shared that Mel was ready, but she wasn't. The Newsletter, Calendar & Bible Study seemed to bring back all sorts of memories. She was so glad that we were able to send each edition to him.



Anniversary for December 2017



Tommy & Patty Peyton celebrated their Anniversary on December 21, 2017.



Birthdays for December, 2017



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

Up Coming Events

Tuesday, January 2, 2018

9:00 am – Volunteers to arrive to complete set-up for food Distribution

10:30 am - Food Pantry Opens for food Distribution

Wednesday, January 3, 2018

11:30 am – Fellowship & Lunch in the Youth Wing before Bible Study

12:00 Noon – Bible Study with Pastor Ed – in the Youth Wing

Saturday, January 13, 2018

8:00 am - Elders Breakfast Meeting in Kirtley Hall

9:30 am – Volunteers to meet in the Sanctuary to take all Christmas Decorations down and store for next year.

Thursday, January 18, 2018 – **DEADLINE**

to submit articles or information for February's Newsletter & Calendar****

A SPECIAL NOTE: Every Sunday after Morning Worship, we will be setting up boxes for the Food Pantry distribution on Tuesdays. We can use Volunteers to help get everything ready for Tuesday's Food Pantry.



Check the January's Calendar for additional events taking place at AHCC

HAPPY
New Year