

St. Paul Lutheran Church



"The Red Brick Church on Ave M"

1303 Avenue M; P.O. Box 58 Hondo, TX 78861

Telephone: (830) 426-3222 or 426-2343

Office Hours: Mon.- Wed. 9am-4pm;

closed on Thursday; Fri. 9am-3pm

E-mail: stpaulhondo@yahoo.com

Website: www.stpaulhondo.org

FEBRUARY 2024

We love
because
he first loved
us!

1 JOHN 4:19

St. Paul Staff

Senior Pastor: Beverly Kelling

Children & Family Ministry: Laurie Lentz

Office Secretary: Joann Neuman

Financial Secretary: Erin Guenther

MDO Director: Annette Kammer

Music Ministry Coordinator: Jeanette Rath

Musicians

Guitarist: Jody Jacobs & Ben Rath

Pianist: Rhiannon Smith

Organist: Grace Reed

Drums: Rick Brickles

Vocals: Lynda Halbardier, Kathy Carrigan,

Jan Sprenger, & David Hershberger

Violinist: Jeanette Rath

Services

Sunday, 9:00am

Wednesday, 6:00pm

"Come As You Are" Contemporary Worship Service

Church Website: (stpaulhondo.org)

Facebook page: (St Paul Lutheran Church Hondo)

YouTube: (St Paul Lutheran Church Hondo TX)

Current and past Sunday services can be found here.

2024 Council Members

President	Wayne Scholtz
Vice President	Johnette Dixon
Secretary	Roberta Hennig
Treasurer	Pam Westbrook
Evangelism & Mission	Mark Nester
Education Chair	Jay Reed
Fellowship Chair	Robin Green
Property Chair	Stuart Franke
Lay Ministry Chair	Deb Cleary
Worship & Music Chair	Lynda Halbardier



The Season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on Wednesday, February 14th. The Worship Service will begin at 6:00 pm and our Soup and Sandwich meal will be at approximately 6:45 pm. Each Sunday School Class will be asked to be in charge one of one Wednesday with the youth & children helping as well. But all are welcome to bring soup and sandwiches, salads or desserts to share each Wednesday. We ask for families of St. Paul to help with these meals and to enjoy some fellowship time as well. Please have your food items to the Activity Center by 6 pm on your assigned Wednesday. If the date that you have been assigned does not work for you, please feel free to switch with someone.

Please text me if you have any questions.

Lent Soup & Sandwich schedule included in this newsletter behind the youth page. Thanks in

advance for your help and God bless,

Laurie (210) 213-2088



The Red Brick Church on Ave M

"Then the glory of the God of Israel rose up from between the cherubim, where it had rested & moved to the entrance of the Temple. And the Lord called to the man dressed in linen who was carrying the writer's case. He said to him, "Walk through the streets of Jerusalem & put a mark on the foreheads of all who weep & sigh because of the detestable sins being committed in their city."

Then he said to me, "The sins of the people of Israel & Judah are very, very great. The entire land is full of murder; the city is filled with injustice. They are saying, 'The Lord doesn't see it! The Lord has abandoned the land!' So I will not spare them or have any pity on them. I will fully repay them for all they have done." Then the man in linen clothing, who carried the writer's case, reported back & said, "I have done as you commanded." Ezekiel 9:3-4, 9-11

'those in Zion who mourn. I will take away the ashes on their head, & I will give them a crown. I will take away their sadness, & I will give them the oil of happiness. I will take away their sorrow, & I will give them celebration clothes...' Isaiah 61:13

We live in a time when the many sins we commit against a Holy God are overlooked, ignored, swept under the rug, denied, justified & even celebrated. But Ezekiel reminds us of the seriousness of sin & the repentance God desires. In the Bible ashes are an important symbol of grief & repentance; grief over our sin, depravity, arrogance, defiance & resistance to God (individually, as a nation & church). The first step to repentance (a change of heart, mind & action) is acknowledging there is a problem & we are it! We know the Resurrection of Christ is coming soon, but for now, we sit in the ashes our grief over our sins against a Holy God.

The Gospel of Mark ~ C.I.A. – Christ In Action

February 4: Calming the Storm

Psalm 46:1-3, 10

2 Samuel 22:17-25

Mark 4:35-41

***Youth Led Service**

February 11: "And It Happened"

Psalm 33:18-21

Exodus 20:8-11

Mark 2:23-3:6

***Nursing Home Service**

Feb 18: 'Crowds Follow, Few are Appointed'

Psalm 75:1-2, 6-7

Mark 3:7-19

***Confirmation**

February 25: "They Say, I Say"

Psalm 110:77-79

Mark 3:20-35

Lent Sermon Series: One Long Night

Our Lent series will focus on the night of Jesus' betrayal, trials, denials, prayers, persecution & pain.

Feb 14: 'More Than a Meal' - *Ash Wednesday

Mark 14:12-26 – Beverly Kelling

February 21: 'Twice Denied'

Mark 14:27-31; 66-72

– Derlin & Roberta Hennig

February 28: 'Sweating Blood'

Mark 14:32-42 – Clay Patterson

March 6: 'Betrayed & Deserted'

March 13: 'No Real Evidence Needed'

March 20: 'When Words Won't Help'

March 28: *Maundy Thursday

March 29: "Nailed to the Cross" - *Good Friday

*Keep your eyes on Jesus,
our righteousness & the prize for life!
In Christ & with love, Beverly <////><*

A heartfelt thank you to everyone! My word for this year continues to be ALOT.

There's alot going on AND we've had ALOT of love shown! I appreciate you more than you know!!!

RESPONSIBILITIES

Date	February 4th	February 11th	February 18th	February 25 th
Altar Flowers	Chuck & Lynda Halbardier	Derlin & Roberta Hennig	Laura Hethcock	OPEN
Sanctuary Lamp	Rick & Chrie McCue	Lentz Family	OPEN	Audrey Moncada
Head Ushers	Johnette Dixon Mark Nester	Deb Cleary Jay Reed	Wayne Scholtz Roberta Hennig	Lynda Halbardier Stuart Franke
Lectors	Youth	Marilyn Graff	Deb Cleary	Erica Halbardier
Acolytes	Ayelet & Witten Reus	Patrick Weimer Lyla Torres-Tapia	MJ Neuman Kinslee Anderwald	Klair & Eli Bradshaw
Altar Guild	Janice Wright & Becky Scott			

Please sign up for Flowers & Sanctuary Lamp. The charts are in the Education Building or call the office. If you would like for the church to order the flowers, they are \$60.00 please contact the office.

BIRTHDAYS

2/02 Cynthia Patterson

Ryan Graff

Joseph Weimer

Lyla Zipp

2/04 Desiree Gilmer

2/08 Gunner Schweers

2/10 David Lentz

2/11 Gary Krenmueller

Dianne Bradley

Tom Reed

2/12 Ann Halbardier

2/13 Gabe Cortez

2/14 Clancie Schueling

2/15 Phillip Wright

Steve Zerr

Sadie Schweers

2/17 Rod Prewitt

2/23 Kathy Carrigan

Robert Schildt



2/24 Kay Henry

2/25 Charles Mumme

2/26 Jennifer Molitor

Layne Summerlin

2/27 Easton Beard

Brad Bendele

Caroline Bendele

2/28 Annette Kammer

Megan Longoria

Westley Halbardier

2/29 Brandie Brucks

February 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
Pastor Beverly and Mark out on Vacation January 29 th - February 4 th						
4 Youth Sunday 9:00am Worship TACO SUNDAY 10:00am Fellowship 10:30 am Sunday School	5 Cornerstone 10am-2pm 6:00pm Women's Study 7:00pm Men's Bible Study	6 7:00am Prayer Warriors 6:00pm Journaling Study	7 9am Tacking Quilters 11:00 BSF (LLB) 4pm-5:15pm 4 th -6 th Bible Study "CAYA" 6pm Worship Service Youth following service 7:00pm Bible Study	8 Office Closed High School BSF 1pm Hand Quilters	9	10
11 9:00am Worship 10:00am Fellowship 10:30 am Sunday School 2:00pm Nursing Home	12 Cornerstone 10am-2pm Friends In Faith 1:30pm-3pm 6:00pm Women's Study	13 7:00am Prayer Warriors 6:00pm Journaling Study	14 9am Tacking Quilters 11:00 BSF 4pm-5:15pm Kinder-3 rd Bible Study ASH WEDNESDAY Lent Worship Service 6pm Soup & Sandwiches 7:00pm Bible Study	15 Office Closed High School BSF 1pm Hand Quilters	16	17
18 9:00am Worship 10:00am Fellowship 10:30 am Sunday School 2pm-6pm Confirmation 4:30pm Emmaus Gathering @ MVUMC	19 Cornerstone 10am-2pm 6:00pm Women's Study 7:00pm Men's Bible Study	20 7:00am Prayer Warriors 7:00pm Council Meeting	21 9am Tacking Quilters 11:00 BSF (LLB) Lent Worship Service Soup & Sandwiches following service 7:00pm Bible Study	22 Office Closed High School BSF 1pm Hand Quilters	23	24
25 9:00am Worship 10:00am Fellowship 10:30 am Sunday School Rummage Sale set-up	26 Cornerstone 10am-2pm Friends In Faith 1:30pm-3pm 6:00pm Women's Study	27 7:00am Prayer Warriors 6:00pm Journaling Study	28 9am Tacking Quilters 11:00 BSF (LLB) Lent Worship Service Soup & Sandwiches following service 7:00pm Bible Study	29 Office Closed High School BSF 1pm Hand Quilters	RUMMAGE SALE	



Youth and Children of St. Paul

February

BE MINE

Never too early to start planning for VBS....Monday, June 3rd to Friday, June 7th from 9 am to Noon. We will have our VBS Pool Party Celebration on Thursday, June 6th. Contact Carrie if you would like to volunteer. Our theme this year will be Star Wars.

WE NEED YOUR HELP.....WE ARE IN NEED OF SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS. CALL THE CHURCH OFFICE OR CONTACT CARRIE WEIMERS. GOD DOESN'T CALL THE EQUIPPED, HE EQUIPS THE CALLED.

Christ confess pray Lent ashes forgiveness

RUMMAGE SALE

RUMMAGE SALE.... Mark your calendars, start your spring cleaning, and purge the stuff you don't need anymore or just want to get rid of. We will start collecting stuff on Sunday, Feb 25th thru Thursday, Feb. 29th. Our sale will be on Friday, March 1st as well as Saturday, March 2nd. This is our second time to be open Friday as well, so please come help. This is a camp fundraiser so lots of help will be needed. You can shop on Wednesday during Lent.

Easter Egg Hunt

Palm Sunday is March 24th

8:50 am – Meet in the Annex for Palm Processional

10:30 am – Sunday School

11:30 am –Baked Potato Bar Fundraiser

12:00 pm – Easter Egg Hunt

This year we have decided to do our Camp Baked Potato Bar Fundraiser the same day as our Easter Egg Hunt so families don't have to rush to get or bring food. Bring your own Easter Basket but no need to bring eggs.

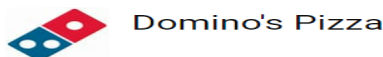
Bible Study Opportunities

Kinder-3rd Grade: 2nd & 4th
Wednesdays – 4-5:15 pm

4th-6th Grade: 1st & 3rd
Wednesdays – 4-5:15 pm

High School Junior/Senior
Lunch Bible Study 11:10-11:45
every Thursday

Youth – 7th to 12th grade every
Wednesday 7 to 8:15 pm



St. Paul Children & Youth who will be attending Camp Eagle - Summer 2023 will be having a Pizza Night @ Dominos on Friday, March 1st from 5-8 pm. We will receive 20% of all the sales when you mention St. Paul Lutheran Campers when you order. Thank you in advance for your support. Who doesn't love a Family Pizza Night! This is for the Hondo Location only.

The Youth will be leading the Worship Service on Sunday, February 4th ! And the children and their parents will be in charge of Taco Sunday. It will be a full but blessed Sunday morning. Contact Laurie if you would like to participate.

Great Job to all who participated in the Medina County Livestock Show! You are all winners in my book. Each of you worked hard to make your project the best.



In a world full of bad things, always remind your children to be KIND. We never know what tough times others are going through. CHOOSE KINDNESS

XLXXVIII.XIX

Please contact Rick McCue if you and your family would like to help with flags. Great community service project to put on scholarship forms. Volunteer to help with this great project.

Ash Wednesday is February 14th
We will again have families and Sunday School classes bring food, help serve, and clean up for the Wednesday night meals. The schedule is in this February newsletter. Please read it!

Do you have a child or children attending Camp Eagle this summer? If you do and would like to be in charge of one of the fundraising ideas on the back of this page, that would be awesome! You can contact me and let me know which one you would like. The Rummage Sale and Baked Potato Bar are two great fundraisers to get involved with.

Big Dates in 2024:

February 14th →
Ash Wednesday
Worship 6 pm
Soup & Salad 6:45 pm

February 18th →
Confirmation @ the Frio

February 25th →
Rummage Sale Drop
Off begins

March 1st →
Dominos Pizza night

March 1st & 2nd →
Rummage Sale

Sunday, March 24th
→ Palm Sunday
Processional 8:50 am
Sunday School
Potato Bar Fund. for
Camp 11:30
Easter Egg Hunt 12

April 7th →
Confirmation Sunday





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All are welcome to bring soup and sandwiches to share each Wednesday. We ask for families of St. Paul to help with these meals and to enjoy some fellowship time as well. Please have your food items to the Activity Center by 6 pm on your assigned Wednesday. Please text me if you have any questions.

If the date that you have been assigned does not work for you, please feel free to switch with someone. Thanks in advance for your help and God bless. Laurie 210-213-2088

Youth/Children/Adult Groups
Lent Soup & Sandwich Schedule

February 14th - Sarah Reus Family-Soup, Carrie Weimer Family - Soup, Baxter Family - Soup, Terrill Family-Sandwiches, Greenwalt Family - sandwiches, Lentz Family - sandwiches, Brickles Family - Dessert, Franke Family - Dessert, Clancey Schueling Family - Dessert

Bob Mayne's Sunday School Class

February 21st - Kristi Santos Family Soup, Megan Longoria Family-Soup, Lentz Family - Soup, Tara DeLeon Family -Sandwiches, Tara Callis Family-Sandwiches, Family-Dessert, Brittany Garcia Family- Dessert

Rod Sprenger's Sunday School Class

February 28th - Jen Wiemers Family-Soup, Erica Halbardier Family - Soup, Meredith Saathoff Family - Sandwiches, Gretchen Sittre Family - Sandwiches, Lentz Family Dessert, Ashley Anaya Family - Dessert

YAK Sunday School Class

March 6th - Anderwald Family - Soup, Reenie Beard Family - Soup, Denman Family - Sandwiches, Heather Uriegas Family-Sandwiches April Torres Family Dessert, Marti Graff Family - Dessert

Rod Prewitt's Class

March 13th - Tammy Neuman Family-Soup, Veronica Nickols Family-Soup, Julie Barnett Family-Sandwiches, Katy Hays Family - Sandwiches, April Barr Family-Dessert, Megan Fernandez Family Dessert

Women of the Church

March 20th - Becky Scott Family-Soup, Sarah Bailey Family-Soup, Jennifer Molitor Family-Sandwiches, Velvet Diles Family-Sandwiches, Sadie Schweers Family-Dessert, Tammy Reus Family -Dessert

Band of Brothers

Next 2 Camp Fundraisers.....

Rummage Sale – Drop Off/ Set Up begins Sunday, February 25th – Thursday, February 29th - daily set up 8 am to 5 pm. – Actual Rummage Sale is Friday, March 1st– 8 am -4 pm and Saturday, March 2nd – 8 am to Noon. This fundraiser can actually pay for you kid to go to camp.

Baked Potato Fundraiser – Sunday, March 24th – Palm Sunday @ 11:15 am. (The Easter Egg Hunt will be at noon – so grab a baked potato or a sweet potato to eat for lunch then watch the children easter egg hung.) Cynthia Patterson will be in charge of this fundraiser but all are encouraged and welcome to help.



Sunday School(10:30am-11:15am)

3yr old-12th grade:

3-5 yr. old's—LLB— Annette Kammer / Lynda Hook

1st & 2nd – LLB - Jennifer Molitor /Sarah Reus

3rd & 4th – LLB – Becky Burton / Laurie Lentz

5th & 6th – Ed. Bldg. - Geoff Weimer

7th-12th grades- (AC Upper Rooms) –

Pat Cleary/Johnette Dixon

Adult Small Groups:

Study of Hebrews

led by Bob Mayne (O.W.L.S., Act. Center)

“Come and See” led by Ron Sprenger
(Lion’s Den, Legacy Life Bldg.)

“Studying the Books of the Bible”
led by Rod Prewitt (Turtle Room, Ed. Bldg.)

“1 Corinthians” (YAK Class Rm, Ed. Bldg.)

Weekday Bible Study Opportunities:

First and Third Mondays at 7 PM

Men’s Bible Study (LLB) led by Don Krumrey

Second and Fourth Mondays 1:30pm-3:00pm

Friends In Faith (Education Building) led by Pastor Beverly

Mondays at 6 PM

Women’s Bible Study (Education Building)

Tuesdays at 6pm

Journaling & Illustration led by Roberta Hennig (Edu.Blg.)

***Every Tuesday except 3rd Tuesday**

Topical Study led by Cynthia Nester (LLB)

The Josiah Manifesto - TBA

Wednesday at 7pm (Following CAYA)

Through the Bible teaching, studying about prophesy and much that has yet to be fulfilled. Led by David Hershberger (Activity Center – In class next to the kitchen).

“And never stop praying.” ~ 1Thessalonians 5:17

Healing & Comfort:

Chris Porter, Margaret Reus, Buffie Rogge, Dorothy Wells, Matthew Hook, Rene Ortiz, Diane Cooper, Betty Barlow, Henry Nietenhoefer, Jean Krenmueller, Sandi Schweers, Lance Brucks, Bobby Klein, Patricia Welch, Helen Ann Jones, Cindy Sprenger, Ailyn Fernandez, Dough Newtwich, Maricela Frausto and Jane Johnson.

Active Military:

Ben Rath, Larry & Teresa Sullivan, Adriel Schoenhals, Rebecca Bryant, Patrick Green, Andy Lynch, Chelsea Lynch, Riley Lynch, Briana Jernigan, Marc Proctor, Kephren Adams, Kendle Adams, Clayton Reed, Les Armstrong, Kelly Driskill, Desiree (Warner) Pointer, Ethan Kammer, Heath Runnels, Collin Bezely, Jessie Philip, Rachel Morgan, Sean Constante, Jimmy Sawyer Rhodes & Dawson Brumbelow. Thank you Lord for our military.

***(Please help us to update, if we need to add or remove someone from the list above please contact the office.)**

Children/Youth Bible Study Opportunities

Kinder-3rd Grade: 2nd & 4th Wednesdays

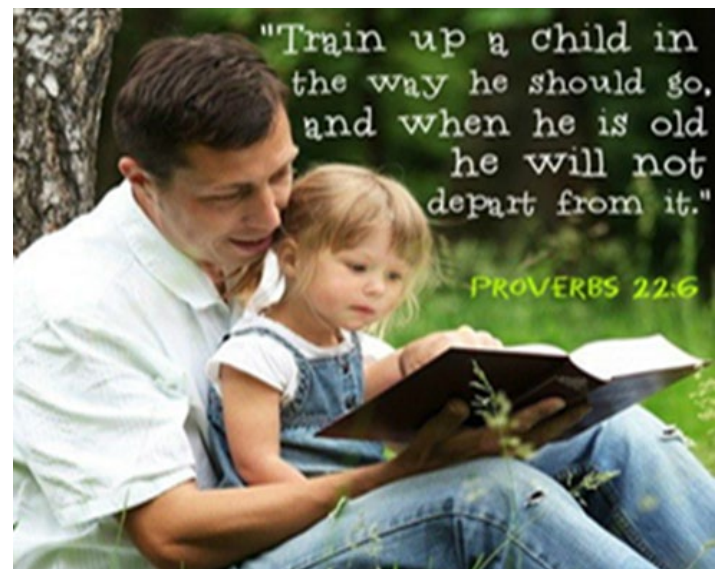
4th-6th Grade: 1st & 3rd Wednesdays

Thursday High School Junior/Senior Lunch Bible Study

11:15am -11:45pm - see the church calendar for dates

Youth – 7th to 12th grade every Wednesday 7 to 8:15 pm

***Check your messages from Laurie or call the office with questions**



HERE AT ST. PAUL LUTHERAN

"COME AS YOU ARE"

6pm Worship Service

February 7th – David Herschberger

LENT BEGINS

Lenten Meal following these Worship Services

ASH WEDNESDAY February 14th – Pastor Beverly

February 21st – Derlin & Roberta Hennig

February 28th – Clay Patterson

March 6th - Don Krumrey

March 13th – Derlin Hennig

March 20th – Laurie Lentz

Our condolences to Jan & Ronnie Sprenger and the Sprenger families on the loss of their son Dillon Reyes and also on the loss of Ronnie's mother Jessie Schievelbein.

Our condolences to Tammy, Cambry & Cassidy Reus and the Reus families on the passing of Mark Reus.

Our condolences also to the Zipp family on the passing of Dalton Zipp's mother Beth Harrington Zipp.

We love you all and are lifting you up in our prayers.



St. Paul Women of the Church

Women of the Church business meeting

Wednesday, February 21st at 10:00am in the Activity Center. This meeting is open to any of the women of St. Paul who would like to join us.



CHURCH RUMMAGE SALE

MARCH 1ST & 2ND (Friday & Saturday)

Donations can begin being dropped off on or after Sunday, February 25th.

Look for further details about a new book study coming possibly in the next month following Lent . Starting date not chosen as of yet. We will be studying the Josiah Manifesto, the latest book by Rabbi Jonathan Cahn. In light of the sobering truths Scripture reveals about the end times, could a blueprint exist showing what you need to know to stand and prevail in the days ahead?

In his latest blockbuster book,

The Josiah Manifesto: The Ancient Mystery & Guide for the End Times,

New York Times bestselling author Jonathan Cahn opens up the stunning mysteries behind world-changing events of recent times and a hidden message about what lies ahead.

Look for more details in the March Newsletter or contact Cynthia Nester for more details. 210-862-0038.



FAMILY

One of the greatest gifts that God gave man during creation was The Family. The family is where we are meant to grow, to learn, to thrive. It is where we gain our identity, its where we are nurtured and loved.

As believers in our Savior, Jesus the Christ; we are members of an even greater Family which is the Body of Christ!

During our recent earthly losses our family has seen this Body of Christ, at St Paul pour out their love on our behalf in many, many ways. During times like these it is hard to know what to do or say to persons in pain.

But we want you all to know this; your notes matter, your smiles matter, your thoughts spoken or not matter, you winks of assurance matter, your silent tears matter, your presence matters. Sometimes we run out of things to say, words become platitudes and all we can do is simply be there. That matters greatly too.

The Body of Christ is alive and well at St Paul.

While in the depths of things that we don't understand, when nothing seems to make sense, we lean into the open arms of Jesus; knowing that we have brothers and sisters that have our backs.

THANKS FOR BEING THERE!

SPRENGER FAMILY

Dear St. Paul Congregation,
On behalf of the Directors + Volunteers
we thank you for your generous
financial support and donations
of food to the Medina County Food
Pantry. It makes a real difference
in helping those of all ages in our
community. With sincere gratitude,
Thank you!

Duffinn Pruitt

Dear friends at St. Paul Lutheran,
Praise be to God for your continued
generosity + dedication to our work at
Restore Reproductive Health! Lives are
being impacted for the Kingdom, and hearts
are being moved to know our Savior.

Knowing you are with us in this effort
sustains our spirits + enables us to
meet needs for our clients. Thank you
for your support!

Gratefully,
Diane Cosgrove
Executive Director

This Month's Special Offering - Ministries of St. Paul:

Band of Brothers

Band of Brothers is a group of men from St. Paul and surrounding churches that meets once a month here at St. Paul to fellowship and discuss the needs of assistance in our community. These needs in the community are identified by referral or an application submitted by the person or family needing help. Our group in the past has built multiple wheelchair ramps, done to comply with ADA code, fences, yard work, cleared brush and many other projects. At the end of every project the Band of Brothers gathers in prayer with the individual or family. Band of Brothers purchases all the necessary materials for the project or ramp if the family is unable to. Your donations allow us to offer these projects at no cost to the family or individual in need. This year we already have a few requests for wheelchair ramps among other projects. We are truly grateful for the support St. Paul has shown us and we look forward to helping countless others in the future.

Sincerely,

Tim Neuman

Quilters / Women of the Church

St. Paul Quilter's / Women of the Church have two groups of quilters who financially operate with one account and a treasurer who oversees the purchases of supplies. The Thursday hand stitchers keep two frames up to work on two quilts at all times. These beautiful quilts are always made from new fabric, batting and thread. The Wednesday 'tacking quilters' use donated fabrics and make quilts to Lutheran World Relief specifications. We appreciate that two of the hand stitching ladies design and sew the pieced tops for the tackers to complete. Half of the tacked quilts are sent to LWR once a year and we pay a shipping fee for each quilt. The remaining quilts are delivered to the border church in Laredo. Smaller child-themed quilts are donated to the local Bluebonnet Children's advocacy group here in Hondo.

Both groups enjoy and are thankful for the fellowship and opportunity to serve in this way.

Sincerely,

Betty Ann Prewitt



How to Grow Your Church

In my role as Director of Mission Growth, a common question that church members and even some pastors ask me is “How do we grow our church?” I love this question because it tells me a few things about the person asking it. First, the very question itself communicates that the person asking recognizes that their church has a purpose to connect to more people and reveals a “holy discontent” with the present reality. Secondly, the question also informs me that the asker is genuinely interested and open to learning and implementing new ideas. Both having a heart to connect with more people and a teachable spirit are key components to ministry success and congregational revitalization.

The question also presents a bit of a challenge: Growing a bigger church should never be the mission of the church! Instead, church growth is a byproduct of a church engaging in and accomplishing its true mission and purpose. So, what is the true mission and purpose of the church? In my opinion, it can be summed up with “connecting people to Jesus.” Exactly what this looks like in each congregation and community can and should be very different: no two congregations are alike; nor are the contexts in which those congregations minister.

I truly believe that churches who prioritize connecting people to a life-giving relationship with Jesus will indeed grow. Yet growth, in and of itself, should not be the actual goal. What would happen if we stopped obsessing over worship attendance or confirmation class size or Sunday School participation and started prioritizing and praying for those in our community whom God is calling us to befriend with the purpose and intent of gently and lovingly connecting them with Jesus? How can churches prioritize this activity as their mission, encouraging and equipping one another for everyday mission work?

In the book *7 Habits of Healthy Churches*, Marcus Carlson notes that “Healthy churches are focused more on those outside the church than those inside the church.” I couldn’t agree more with Carlson’s assertion. To be clear, this does not mean that healthy churches do not care for one another within the church; healthy churches always love one another. What the author is pointing out is a reality I routinely observe: in the absence of a clear, outward-focused mission, congregations always default to pleasing their own members as their de facto purpose. Whenever a congregation focuses on member satisfaction, it becomes unhealthy and ultimately, inevitably declines.

God is calling the church to more. That more isn’t simply to worry about stopping decline and growing our congregation. The more God is calling the church to is a mission that extends beyond our church walls and prioritizes connecting people to Jesus.

Pastor Bryce Formwalt is the Director of Mission Growth for LCMC Texas District and Program Director of Harvest Workers, an online ministry training program (learn more at www.harvestworkers.net). Residing in Georgetown, Pastor Bryce is available to coach congregations on mission. Please contact him with any questions or comments: 512-942-7776 or bryce@lcmctexas.org.

LCMC Texas District 2024 Annual Gathering



LOVE WORKS

LUKE 10:27

July 26-27, 2024
Kerrville, Texas

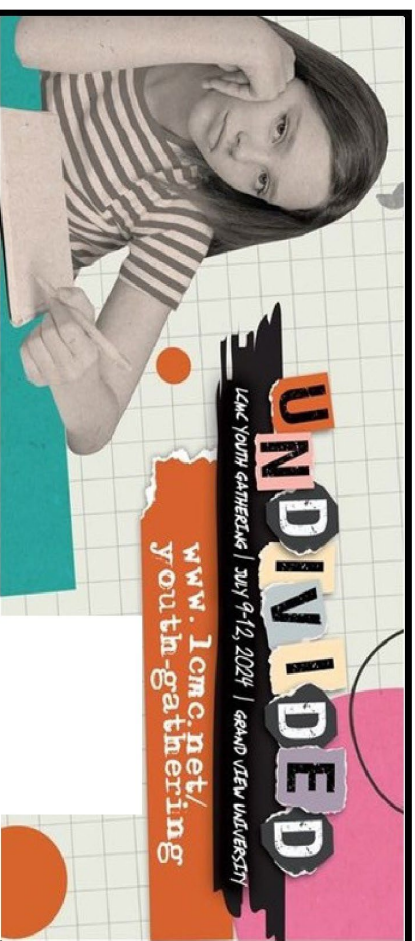
Have an idea for a breakout
presentation? Submit your
idea to us by March 1.

*Scan the code for more details
or to submit an idea!*



or visit

www.lcmctexas.org/annual-gathering



WHAT: LCMC Youth Gathering

WHEN: July 9-12, 2024

WHERE: Grand View University, Des Moines, IA

Registration for our youth gathering is open to students
completing grades 7-12, youth leaders, and adult
chaperones.

GROW: Get inspired and gain practical advice on what
God may be calling YOU to do through keynote
presentations and breakout sessions.

SERVE: Lend a hand and make a real difference
in the community!

PLAY: Connect with other high school students and youth
leaders from LCMC, then head out to The Green for
mixers, games, inflatables, and an ice cream social.
We've also set aside time in our schedule for you to spend
quality time with your crew!