
AROUND THE COASTAL BEND

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COASTAL BEND MISSION CENTER

The season Christmas will be upon us very soon, and as we make preparation for the celebrations that it brings, our church life turns attention to Season of Advent, in which we make room in the inn that is our personal and corporate busyness for the arrival the Christ Child once again. While those in the gospel stories of the birth of Jesus were largely unaware of the significance of what was taking place in their midst, we who follow Jesus today as disciples have the witness of centuries to enlighten our understanding and to form our anticipation.

The community that every congregation creates anew each time that we meet together is enriched by the shared experiences of worship and wonder that this season brings. And our personal reflection and contemplation in response to the gift of God to the world can draw from us qualities of awe, humility, forgiveness, and welcome which are worthy of our claim to be disciples of Jesus.

Yet, surely the tidings of great joy and peace and goodwill to all are not intended to be brought out for display during the holidays, only to be tucked away until next year like a holly wreath or a red candle. The reason that Advent is Advent is because it reminds that the dramatic intervention of Jesus into human history was to accomplish once and for always what we humans could not and cannot do for ourselves. Once, and for always.

Rather than this season being one in which we make yet another temporary truce with our lesser selves, agreeing to dress up our behavior among family, neighborhood and congregation, may we resolve to make one or two or ten conscious decisions that will

remain a part of us, and that will continue to dress our lives in February and August and beyond.

Terry Shelton reporting



After lots of traveling during the summer months to such places as Michigan, Texas Valley, Arizona, Bandera for reunions and camps, Graceland for SPEC, Italy, and Mexico, we are now all back home and settling into our Fall schedule. During the summer we continued to have Spirit-filled worship services and took advantage of the World Church DVD series enjoying great ministry from: President Veazey, Tony and Charmaine Chvala Smith, and others. Members of the Community Peace Scholarship Committee recently visited the eight high schools that participated in the scholarship program to present them each with a check to be used to enhance their libraries. One of the schools said they would use the money towards Nook digital readers.

We continue to work with the seven food pantries in the area through the Fienstien Foundation in providing rice and beans when the food is available. We are looking forward to meeting with the Live Oak Congregation in November to watch the World Church Scripture DVD and to receive information that will prepare us for the USA National Conference in 2013. Our garage sale at the church will be on Saturday, November 5th so we are all busy cleaning our closets and looking around and finding objects we haven't used in years and clothes we haven't worn for a while or just don't fit anymore. The proceeds will go into our camping fund.

It's a busy time for all of us as the holidays approach. Our Thanksgiving meal with all the trimmings will be held after church on November 20th. The Christmas party will be held this year at the Westbrook home in

Bay City on Saturday, December 2nd. Once again instead of exchanging Christmas gifts, which has been our custom, we will pool our monetary gifts and look through the Outreach International gift catalogue and decide where we can do the most good.

We are challenged now to understand more fully how to use the five mission initiatives in order to increase our focus on Christ's mission...our mission, and make it our highest priority.

Barbara Westbrook Reporting



USTIN

The Austin congregation is back in full swing, now that our construction is officially behind us. Our new kitchen is beautiful, thanks to Bill Cleveland's leadership and his team's hard work. The only portion of the kitchen that wasn't completed by congregational members was the installation of the countertops. On a side note, during remodeling, Bill suffered a heart attack while at home. We are so very grateful and blessed that he has made an amazing recovery! Autumn and Winter's calendar finds us busy and hoping that you'll join us in our many of our activities. On Wednesdays in October-November, our congregation will be sharing dinner and having conversations regarding the direction we should take with our ministry as a whole.

On November 13th, we will be holding our 21st annual Thanksgiving dinner for the homeless.

December 10th is our annual Ladies Christmas Tea. Everyone is formally invited to join us in this quiet time of simple celebration.

January 7th will be a day of studying scripture and getting ready for the topics to be addressed at the World Conference. Mark Euritt will be hosting this discussion. All are invited to attend.

January 22nd will be our Consecration celebration and service for our building. Apostle Rick Maupin will be our guest. We hope you'll join us!

Finally, beginning in January, Eric Cox will be starting a series of classes on The Financial Peace University to those in need of reining in spending, getting out of debt, starting a budget and learning to save money.

Carla Cox Reporting



Hello Fall – Goodbye Summer! Here at Bay Area we are more than ready for cooler temperatures, how about you all?

What's the answer to a hot muggy evening in August? Why, a Pool Party at the Graybill's home, of course! All 20 + teens and adults had a wonderful time enjoying **FUN, FOOD, and FELLOWSHIP**. Craig and Judy, we will be back to see you next summer!

On Sunday, August 14, the Bay Area Branch held a Business Meeting. We were excited to have Ron Saur share with us as he brought greetings from the Coastal Bend Mission Center. In a very important item of New Business, Russ Hall was elected to be our new Pastor beginning January 1, 2012. As we look forward to Russ' ministry, we also take a moment to appreciate the wonderful ministry, guidance and support Judy Daniels has brought us over the last 3 years. Many thanks, Judy!

The **Free Labor Day Weekend Retreat** at Sionito saw many of our members heading west to be a part of the fun and fellowship. Everyone always has a great time attending the annual retreat but a **FREE** retreat is even better!

Our Wednesday evening service for teens and adults continues to bring a special ministry to all who attend. Come visit us at Bay Area!

Marcia Taylor reporting



We have been enjoying the fall so far! We have had several guest speakers come to our little congregation in the past few months. Their charisma and message has really sparked a fire amongst our members! We look forward to worshipping with them again. We are continuing a recycle program that encourages members at the church and in their homes to recycle paper, plastic, and aluminum cans in order to help our community. Matt Tessler and his girlfriend Cindy

Barrero are still in Seattle, Washington continuing their adventure of working in vineyards and teaching Spanish to little children. Two of our members will be leaving us in December. Harry and Andi Henderson will be heading off to Buffalo, NY with their family. We will definitely miss their talented contributions and willingness to serve. We did lose one of our members in October. Dr. Juan Baertl passed away peacefully after fighting a ten year battle with Alzheimer's. His humor and kindness will be missed. We have a lot of new ideas for our congregation and can't wait to share the great news as we continue to serve our community! If you're ever in our area, please stop by to say hello!

Meg Baertl reporting



Have you heard? Fairbanks and North Houston are merging!! A merger team is at work to find us a new home, a new ministry and to discover who we are and who we want to become!! We are very excited about this huge but welcomed step. It was a bit scary at first. Change is always hard at times and that was no different for the Fairbanks congregation. Yet, the knowledge that God's Spirit is with us gives us real hope and excitement for the journey ahead.

After a series of meetings with the buyers of the Fairbanks Facility led by David Romig, with Ron Rowbottom, Ron Saur and Joanne Chapman in attendance, a contract was signed and December 18th we will close on the sale of our facility.

The merger team for the new congregation consists of people from both Fairbanks and North Houston. This team has been entrusted with the job of seeing that everything goes according to World Church specifications. We learned right away that there are certain steps and paper work that has to be done before congregations can merge. It takes a lot of work and time, but in the end we all feel it will be worth our efforts.

Sybil and Sonny Miller were the first to begin packing up Fairbanks belongings for the temporary move to North Houston. Sybil has always been in charge of the beautiful flower arrangements and worship setting each Sunday. She also has spent years being the director of music for the congregation. She is a faithful servant. In the last 10 years there have been very few

times when you would not find Sybil sitting at the piano.

The people who bought the facility are also in the business of sharing God's love. They are very excited to have their new property. Their main Sanctuary is down the street from us. They also own the property next door. One of the things that excites me for them is that the Fairbanks property will become their main facility for their young adults (of which they have around 200) I cannot think of a better group to pass the baton to.

We have really enjoyed having Ron Rowbottom and his lovely Teddy in our congregation. Ron has a wonderful and unique way of sharing God's word. We never know what character we will be seeing at the worship service. And Teddy is a presider plus. Being from Canada I am sure they have had to get used to our Texas ways....but.....Teddy found herself referring to a pickle one of the children was eating as a "big old" pickle. She (and we) chuckled when she realized what she had said....we'll make a Texan out of her yet!

Leo Caesar, Andrea Hunter and Joanne Chapman represented Fairbanks at the Mission Center Conference this month. Apostle Rick Maupin was guest of the Mission Center and gave us some good insight into the USA Conference that will take place in 2013.

Remember to keep smiling, keep praying and keep loving each other as our Lord loves us!



LAKE CHARLES

The Lake Charles congregation spent the end of the summer getting children ready to go back to school. Wal-Mart gift cards were given out for each school-aged child in the congregation and were well-received.

Lake Charles continues to be faithful and follow God's direction and service by electing new co-pastors for the coming year. Becky Crawford and Ruth Askew will serve in that capacity and the congregation looks forward to their leadership. A priesthood call to the office of deacon was considered for Rick Crawford and was unanimously approved by the congregation. Rick is a humble and devoted servant and many people spoke in favor of his call.

Marta and David Benglis recently returned from a trip to Portland, Oregon to visit their daughter, Emily, son-in-law, Micheil, and granddaughter, Molly. Gary Woods has also recently returned from a trip to Montana to visit his daughter, Richelle, and her family.

The congregation also enjoyed a visit from Terry Shelton who strengthened us with his ministry and humble spirit.

We all look forward to the upcoming Thanksgiving and Christmas season as we remember God's blessings and His call to us to serve those around us with donations of food and ministry.

Debbie Graybill reporting



Rustlings from Live Oak

We had 17 attend Sionito # 2 this summer. Four of our children attended camps. Unfortunately, Dylan had to come home early due to illness. He had some kidney stones removed and is now doing well. Justin McAdory and Martel Matthews participated in SPEC. On July 31, we enjoyed a joint worship with Pasadena on bearing each other's burdens. We created two mobiles about what relieves our burdens, one for each congregation.

Alita McAdory and 3 nurses from her floor presented a paper at an international nurses' conference in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. The paper received several accolades. They recently presented the paper in San Antonio, also.

August 21st we met at the McAdory home for snacks and a movie. We watched "Facing the Giants." Afterward Justin and Martel shared their experiences from SPEC.

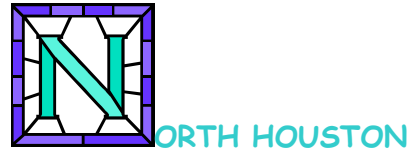
In October, we prepared 3 care packages. Two went to our college students, Rachel Graham (Graceland) and Aaron McAdory (HCC) and a third went to Melissa Whitmer's son, Brad, in Afghanistan.

Several members of the congregation supported Justin and Martel in their football. The Hightower Hurricanes are on to the playoffs. Kudos to our two senior football stars.

We continue to uphold the Jaeger Family in prayer. Jessica has been switched to a new cancer treatment study as the previous one was not working.

God's best blessings to each of you.

Pam Romig reporting



Our members have done a lot of traveling since the last issue. Rhonda, Lili, and Victoria Radliff went to Florida to be with a close friend (who was dying of cancer) and to Onset, Mass on vacation. Rhonda was in California later on a business trip, and she and Lili attended the Peace Colloquy in Independence (emphasis was on ecology; Lili wants to be an ecology lawyer).

Many of us attended Reunions, especially Reunion 2 at Sionito. Teri and Steve went to visit their daughter in Yuma Arizona and Dorothy Hibbard visited her grandchildren in Phoenix Arizona. David Siddall visited his sister in Colorado who was very ill. Unfortunately she passed away and it was David's sad duty to give ministry at her funeral in Iowa. Rachel, David's wife, visited her sister, who lives in China.

David, Teri and Steve, Leigha Ruffin, and Jimmie, Rhonda, and Victoria Radliff represented North Houston at the Mission Center Conference at Sionito.

We have enjoyed joint meetings and services with Fairbanks members and look forward to more unified gatherings as the merger progresses.

Although the Texas drought has been difficult, we are grateful we have been spared from fires, floods, tornadoes, earthquakes, radiation fallout, and tsunamis!

May the Lord continue to bless us and each of you is our humble prayer.

Jimmie Radliff reporting



The Pasadena Branch had excellent attendance at Reunion #2 and Cheyenne Moore was baptized by Elder Richard Cole on 07-03. The Lab or Day Retreat at Camp Sionito drew many of our members, while other members were on trips. Therefore, for the first time in years, the church was closed on 09/04. We prefer to keep the doors open.

It was a happy occasion when visitors came from Live Oak and North Houston Branches on 07/31. They enriched our summer church program by participating joyfully. 37 were present and delicious potluck was served. Come back again: Kibby, Romig and Radliff Families, and Kathy Wingard. All y'all are welcome!

On 08-19, an "End of Summer Game Night" was held. Summer Pappas volunteered to run the "Win It in a Minute" game, which had everyone laughing. Also, some folks played Twister and others played Mexican Train. 36 people joined in the festivities and ate some great snacks.

It was announced in the July Newsletter that Ginger Walker would be ordained to Elder on 08-28. However, it was postponed to 09-25 when Elders Jonathan (elected Pastor again) and Karen Coit performed the ordinance. Again we delighted in the presence of visitors from Shenandoah, Live Oak, and Bay Area Branch. 32 people witnessed this special event. There was a reception with refreshments following the service. Still wanting to be together, 20 people went to Sudie's Seafood Restaurant for lunch.

Joyce Conrad, reporting



SHENANDOAH

It took eleven months from when we moved out of our sanctuary until we received the keys for our expanded and renovated building. But, the wait was worth it. For a few weeks, Shenandoah has been meeting in its expanded area and we now have the keys! The inside is essentially completed, and some outside work remains, however this does not directly affect our use of the building.

Shenandoah is actively planning program elements designed to make our facility a 'Church Home' for the community. In addition to typical congregation activities, already families, Mission Center activities, civic groups, and business entities have begun

planning to use the beautiful facility. Contact us if you are also interested!

To cap off the excitement, plans are in process to have President Steve Veazey and his wife Cathi Cackler-Veazey participate in an Open House and Consecration during the weekend of January 21-22, 2012. Mark your calendars and join us!

Jim Burdick reporting