



*“Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it...” (Jer. 6:16).* Western Hills has come to the crossroads. We are facing a rapidly changing mission field, and we must change to reach it. Western Hills cannot be the church it was even five or ten years ago if it is going to reach El Paso with Christ’s good news in 2017 and beyond. Paradoxically, I believe the best way forward is for us to walk in “the ancient paths.”

We have done good ministry in 2016. We have maintained our strong emphases on discipleship, worship, and serving the community. We would be foolish and unfaithful to deemphasize any of these strengths. However, I am calling us to begin a process of alignment, to bring our ministries into the way of the early church, what John Wesley called “primitive Christianity.” The emphasis

of the first Christians was not church programs, growth strategies, or even evangelism and social reform. Instead, the early church emphasized personal spiritual formation and Christian community formation.

To be sure, various programs, evangelism, worship, and social outreach and transformation are essential characteristics of a healthy Christian church. But they are the fruit of a broad and deep commitment to formation in the likeness and character of Christ. I am convinced that, for us to be who God is calling us to be in 2017 and beyond, we must *Live the Story*. This is what I’m offering as our vision through 2017. *Living the Story* consists of three parts:

**Learning the Story.** I am calling for a renewed commitment for each of us—young and old—to devote ourselves to the study of Scripture. Every one of us should be learning the stories of the Bible, memorizing scriptures, participating in practices like *lectio divina*, or finding whatever way is appropriate for us to learn the great story of God’s revelation and redemption.

**Practicing the Story.** I am calling for a renewed commitment to training for godliness through practices like regular fasting, prayer, silence and solitude, rest and retreat, and so on. These are not practices for a few spiritual over-achievers, but should be a regular part of the life of any disciple of Jesus Christ.

**Sharing the Story.** I am calling for a renewed commitment to Christian community. God’s vision for the world is *shalom*, peace and flourishing among God, all people, and creation. Each and all of us should be committed to relationships of sacrificial love and service in family life and friendships, small group Christian accountability, the larger community, and creation care. As John Wesley said, there is no holiness apart from social holiness.

By learning the story, practicing the story, and sharing the story, we will live the story. As we change our ways of *being* the church, we will have to change our ways of *doing* church. But I firmly believe, if we will commit ourselves to God’s ancient path, we will find ourselves walking together into God’s future.

Grace and Peace, Pastor Robert

*Reaching... Nurturing... Transforming...*

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF WESTERN HILLS UMC — EL PASO, TEXAS

# OUR FAITHFULNESS IN MINISTRY

## WITH OUR PRAYERS

### **SYMPATHY**

Mitzi Underwood & Family, in the loss of her mother  
 Debbie Hand & Family, in the loss of her father  
 Steve & Margaret Haddad, in the loss of their daughter, Mary and daughter-in-law, Becca

### **CONGREGATIONAL PRAYERS**

Jerry Swaney, health concerns  
 Marie Rocheleau, health concerns

### **THE WORLD**

People in the city of Juarez

### **FAMILY & FRIENDS**

Dee Yearwood Cunningham, health concerns  
 Stacy, health concerns  
 Dare Stevens, health concerns  
 Hector Hernandez, health concerns  
 Anabel Andrade  
 Iris and husband, health concerns

Jackie Burkner, health concerns  
 Logan Justin Graham, health concerns  
 Karl Swenson, health concerns  
 Melissa Cheeseman, health concerns

### **FAMILY & FRIENDS with cancer**

Yoli Herlihy  
 Kim Hamilton  
 Marianna Derr  
 Anne  
 Susana  
 Sandy  
 Bob Snead  
 Gavin Moon  
 Sylvia Villagrana  
 Fred Haberlein  
 Thomas Haddad  
 Dena Hathaway  
 Denese Gentry  
 Robert Askelson  
 Jill Askelson  
 Rick  
 Meredith Galyean  
 Barbara Barnhill

*\*Indicates a new prayer request this week.*

## WITH OUR PRESENCE

### **December 4 , 2016**

Worship .....223  
 Sunday School .....100  
 The Ridge .....105  
 Sidewalk SS..... n/a

### **December 11, 2016**

Worship .....242  
 Sunday School .....86  
 The Ridge .....107  
 Sidewalk SS.....64

### **December 18, 2016**

Worship ..... 219  
 Sunday School..... 77  
 The Ridge..... 96  
 Sidewalk SS..... 320

### **December 25 , 2016**

Worship (WH & Ridge) ..... 113

### **January 1, 2017**

Worship (WH & Ridge) ..... 138

## WITH OUR GIFTS

Revenue MTD November 2016: \$61,483.73  
 Expenses MTD November 2016: \$61,149.40

Revenue YTD November 2016: \$637,926.69  
 Expenses YTD November 2016: \$706,837.62

Revenue Budget YTD November 2016: \$786,025.00  
 Expense Budget YTD November 2016: \$753,118.17



## **NEED PRAYER?**

If you have a prayer request or would like to be a part of our Prayer Chain, email ZDMFHM@aol.com or call 915.581.3051.

*Our mission is to reach out with the love of God to those beyond our church, to nurture our church body in the Christian faith and life, helping all to be transformed participants in the mission of Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.*

## **ELECTRONIC GIVING**

Scan the QR code to be taken to our electronic giving website.



Young El Paso Singers  
presents

**"I HEAR AMERICA  
SINGING...AS ONE NATION"**

**Friday, January 13  
7:00PM  
Western Hills UMC  
Admission is Free**

Pianist: Ruben Gutierrez  
Director: Dr. Cindy Jay  
Information: 915-227-6002

**IN PLACE OF POINSETTIAS**  
*SOBREMESA FOOD TRUCK MINISTRY*



*Thanks to  
all your  
contributions,  
\$3,110 was given  
towards the  
WHUMC Food  
Truck Ministry.*

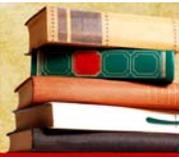
**altar  
flowers**



Purchase altar flowers in honor  
or in memory of loved ones or to  
celebrate a special day. Sign up  
on the chart in the Narthex.

**most 2017 dates are open**

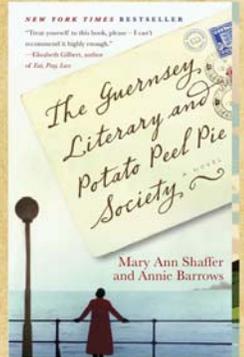
**FAITH, FICTION, & FELLOWSHIP**  
*Page Turners*



January 12  
7pm - 8:30pm  
SFLC Lobby

The Guernsey Literary  
and Potato Peel Pie Society  
Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows

Even if you don't finish the book, join us  
for lively discussion & bring a friend.  
Refreshments Provided



Dearest Family, Friends and Colleagues,

We find that words are woefully inadequate to express our gratitude for your gracious and generous expressions of sympathy and love. Your kind acts have carried us through this very dark time. Our table is laden with delicious and sustaining food; our home is scented with the fragrance of beautiful flowers and plants; we benefited from dry-cleaning, grocery and airport runs; we were embraced by your warm hugs and consoled by phone calls from afar; and we were gratified by your fond remembrances of our precious Mary and her beloved Becca. Many of you participated in their memorial service, which left us filled with hope and strength to face the days to come. We thank you again and covet your continued prayers.

Fondly,  
Steve and Margaret Haddad



# NEWS FROM THE Children's + Ministry

**CLEAR YOUR SCHEDULES**

We're bringing in the New Year with  
**MOM'S NIGHT OUT!**

**Thursday, January 12**

**6:30 pm**

**Angry Owl, 4799 N.Mesa St.**

No need to RSVP, just show up and get ready for some fun and fellowship! Hope to see you there.

If you have any questions please contact Colleen McGuire at 512-627-3291.



JC Crew did a beautiful job singing for the Christmas Eve service. We want to thank David for all his hard work with the children. He has and continues to be a blessing in Children's Ministry.



LOVE



GROW



SERVE

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES MISSION STATEMENT  
**TO LOVE THE LORD OUR GOD WITH ALL  
OUR HEART, WITH ALL OUR SOUL,  
WITH ALL OUR STRENGTH,  
AND WITH ALL OUR MIND.**

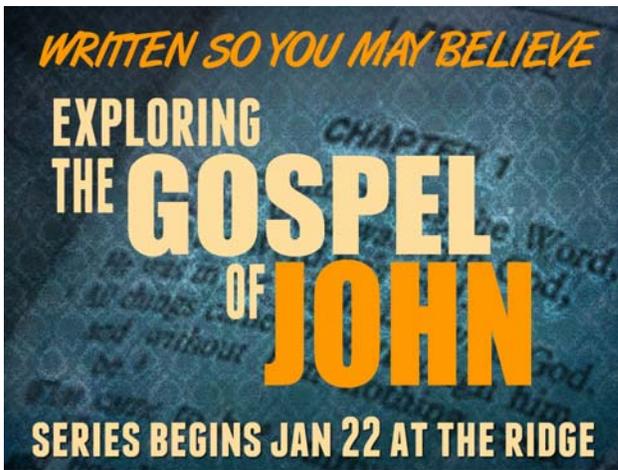
# VIEWS FROM THE RIDGE

There are still a few times left in the 24 Hours of Prayer for the Ridge vigil.

**January 13 & 14**

**6:00PM—6:00PM**

If you would like to sign up for a time, contact Pastor Josh Kouri. 915-228-8864.



Join us for *Written So That You May Believe: Exploring the Gospel of John*

We'll spend 6 weeks in the fourth Gospel learning about this unique and captivating window into the life of Jesus. In preparation for the series, Pastor Josh is challenging the congregation to read the entire Gospel of John by January 22.



*Thanks to all who came and rang bells for Salvation Army last month at the Wal-Mart Market on Doniphan and Redd. We had a great time raising money for the important work of the Salvation Army. We can't wait till next year!*



Fun and family on the ice at the El Paso Events Center, December 18.



*When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. Isaiah 43:2a*

# BAYOU BLESSINGS

March 11-18, 2017

Spring Break Mission Trip

## TRIP COST

\$825/person\*

### \*Cost Breakdown:

- \$550 airfare/transportation
- \$25 per day housing and team meals (7 days = \$175)
- \$100 "fun day"

Deposit of \$400  
Due by January 15<sup>th</sup>  
*deposit is non-refundable*

Payment of \$200  
Due by February 1

Payment of \$225  
(balance)  
Due by February 28

*\* There will be opportunities for you to participate in fundraising activities in January and February.*

*Proceeds will be divided among those who participate in the activity.*

## LODGING:

Lodging will be at one of the host churches in the Baton Rouge/Denham Springs/Gonzalez area. Each host church has showers and sleeping space, usually in a fellowship hall or Sunday School classroom. Most lodging is located less than 30 minutes from the worksite.

*We ask that you bring your own bedding, toiletries, and towels. Most people prefer to bring an air mattress though cots may be available at some sites.*

## BUILDING MATERIALS:

All building materials will be provided at the job site. The Missions Ministry Team will cover the suggested donation for materials (\$100 per adult and \$50 per youth) and insurance (\$35 per individual) for the team.

## DRIVING TEAMS:

We plan to take two 15 passenger vans from El Paso and will need 2 or 3 adults willing to be drivers. Driving teams would leave Friday, Mar. 10 and arrive home Sunday, Mar. 19. We will be collecting/bringing a variety of tools, and able to carry extra luggage.

## TRAININGS/MEETINGS:

There will be a Volunteers In Mission Training held at Western Hills UMC on Sunday Jan. 29 from 2:00-4:30 pm in SFLC Meeting Room. To register for this training call 915-584-2133 by Jan. 15. All leaders are required to attend the training. There will be an additional team meeting to complete all paperwork in late February.

## QUESTIONS/SIGN UP

Contact Pastor Amy at 584-2133.



524 Thunderbird Dr.  
El Paso, TX 79912

Office: (915) 584-2133  
Fax: (915) 833-2965  
WH Academy: (915) 584-6642

## WESTERN HILLS UMC STAFF

**Ministers**  
All Members

**Rev. Robert Pelfrey**  
Senior Pastor

**Rev. Amy Mercer**  
Mission & Discipleship

**Rev. Josh Kouri**  
The Ridge

**Margaret Haddad**  
Director of Music  
Ministries

**David Pena**  
Director of Praise  
& Worship

**Mitzi Underwood**  
Director of Youth  
Ministries

**Colleen McGuire**  
Director of Children's  
Ministries

**Laurie McBride**  
Business/Facilities  
Manager

**Suzy Snow**  
Administrative  
Assistant

**Mindy Archey**  
Publications/  
Communications

**Patricia Aguirre**  
WH Academy