

# Press Bytes



## A CUP OF HOT CHOCOLATE

A group of graduates well established in their careers were discussing their lives at a class reunion. They decided to go visit their old university professor, now retired who always was in inspiration to them. During their visit, the conversation turned to complaints about stress in their work, lives and relationships. Offering his guests hot chocolate the professor went into the kitchen and returned with a large pot of hot chocolate and an assortment of cups.

Some cups were porcelain, glass crystal; some plain looking, some expensive, some exquisite. He invited each to help themselves to the hot chocolate. When they all had a cup of chocolate in hand, the professor shared his thoughts. He noticed that all the nice looking cups were taken, leaving behind the plain and cheap ones.

“While it’s normal for you to want only the best for yourselves, that is the source of your problems and stress. The cup you are drinking from adds nothing to the quality of the hot chocolate. In most cases, it’s just more expensive and in some cases even hides what we drink. What each of you really wanted was the hot chocolate. You did not want the cup but you consciously went for the best cups. Soon you began to eye one another’s cups. Now friends, consider this. Life is the hot chocolate. Your jobs, money, and position in society are the cups. They are just tools to hold and contain life. The cup you have does not define nor does it change the quality of life you are living. Sometimes by concentrating on the cup, we fail to enjoy the life God has given us. Always remember this, God brews the hot chocolate, God does not choose the cup. The happiest people don’t have the best of everything; they just make the best of everything they have. Live simply, love generously, care deeply, speak kindly...leave the rest to God. The richest person is not the one who has the most but the one who needs the least. Enjoy your hot chocolate”.

Peace,  
C.O.

## January Issue

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C.O. Magee (on Cover)

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Insert

January Calendar



January 28th



The mission team has gathered items for Seafarer Boxes, and shopped til they dropped purchasing gifts for our Christmas families. This year we provided 48 Seafarer Boxes for Christmas and instead of the original three families we wanted to help this year for Christmas, we were able to help Five families, thanks to your overwhelming response of donations!! We (and the recipients) are extremely grateful for you!! We would also like to thank everyone who participated in the Bell Ringing for the Salvation Army at Walmart this year. Unfortunately, due to the rain we didn't bring in a whole lot, but every little bit helps. We are looking at having a Mission Sale sometime in the late Spring or Early Summer.



# PYE

The Youth resumed meeting each second and fourth Wednesday evening. They have put together Seafarer Boxes for the mission team, participated in Alvin HOPE's Gift Distribution, and made Custom Elf Ornaments. In January they hope to have a Lock-In, and go to a movie at the theater. In April the youth will attend Conclaves at Camp Cho-Yeh. Conclaves are fun, faith-filled weekends at Camp Cho-Yeh that will enable the kids to grow closer to God and connect with other young people from all over our presbytery. The youth will engage in Bible Study and small groups, experience dynamic worship, participate in a mission project, explore ways to connect with God in the Spirituality Center, and of course have a blast playing games, and making new friends. The cost is \$150.00 per youth. Adult sponsors will be Brandi Bowers and Mandi Odom. While the church can assist with the down payment for the event, further assistance will be needed to fund the entire \$150.00. The youth plan on hosting several fundraisers during 2021. If you would like to help the Youth now you may put a check in the offering plate and note "Youth Fund" on your check or you may adopt a "youth" member attending the event. All help will be appreciated.



**“For I know the plans I have for you”, declares the LORD, “plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope”.**

**Jeremiah 29:11**



# ALVIN HOPE

Over the last three years, Alvin HOPE Charities has been using the library to conduct meetings. This year, we were privileged set up our Christmas Store in the Fellowship Hall for a second time, where parents could shop for their little

ones. This year 250 families were assisted with 650 children receiving gifts from our organization or private sponsors. We also were able to provide stocking stuffers, and a bag of food to each family. **THANK YOU FOR HELPING US HELP THOSE IN NEED.** A Volunteer Appreciation party will be held on Tuesday, January 12th at 7pm in the Fellowship Hall. All are welcome!! If you'd like to learn more about our organization, join us on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 7pm in the library or check out our website [www.alvinhope.com](http://www.alvinhope.com).



“In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps.”

Proverbs 16:9

## CHURCH LEADERSHIP

### Class of 2021

Helen Escobedo

Wanda Cunningham

Jason Elkins

### Class of 2022

Brandi Bowers

Sheila Follmar

Martha Phipps

### Class of 2023

Marisa Whitfield

Cindy Waggoner

Randy Phipps

### Trustees

Lucile Beasley

Herb Myers

Barbara Whitfield

### Church Personnel

<i>Moderator - Rev. Dr. C. O. Magee</i>	· <i>Clerk of Session - Martha Phipps</i>
<i>Treasurer - Cindy Waggoner</i>	· <i>Asst. Treasurer - Mary Aparicio</i>
<i>Giving Coordinator - Barbara Whitfield</i>	· <i>Music Director - Scott Gondesen</i>
<i>Organist / Pianist - Chris Lo</i>	· <i>Secretary - Mandi Odom</i>

### Committee Leadership

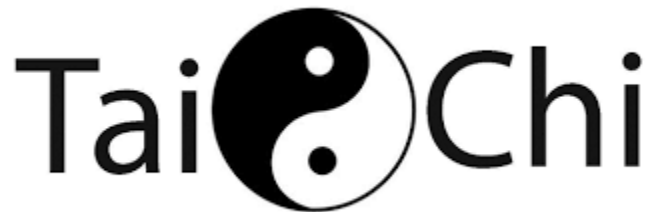
<i>Meals On Wheels - Barbara Whitfield</i>	· <i>Gathering Place - Janet DeLeon</i>
<i>4 G's - Kathryn Wilkerson</i>	· <i>School Supplies - Martha Phipps</i>
<i>Youth Sponsor - Brandi Bowers</i>	· <i>Relay for Life - Jill Wheatley</i>
<i>Fairy God Mothers - Cindy Waggoner</i>	· <i>Scrapbooking - Marisa Whitfield</i>
<i>Buildings &amp; Grounds - Jason Elkins</i>	· <i>Worship - Cindy Waggoner</i>
<i>Missions / Outreach - Janet DeLeon</i>	· <i>Education - Barbara Bennett</i>
<i>Clothing Outlet Coordinator - Sheila Follmar</i>	

**SESSION HIGHLIGHTS****DECEMBER 2020**

The Session met on Sunday, December 20th just after service. Mission updated the Session that funds available for Christmas families ended up at \$1355.00, and are discussing a Mission Sale to be held end of Spring, beginning of Summer depending on Covid stats and restrictions. Congregational Care made 209 contacts. Youth helped with Seafarer Boxes, the Christmas Family project, and Alvin HOPE's Giving Tree Distribution. New toilets will be installed in the women's bathroom in the Education Bldg. Details for the Christmas Eve Service were discussed as well as removing Christmas decorations, with the Nativity scene remaining throughout Epiphany. The 2021 Budget was reduced and amendments approved. A Blood Drive was discussed to be held January 31st, before and after Worship service. An Ugly Sweater/Chili Cook-off is planned for January 17th.

**Elder of the Month - Brandi Bowers****Refreshments for January - Buildings & Grounds**

Note to Congregation: Please remember that the Committee is only responsible for coordinating the refreshments. Please consider helping our committees in supplying refreshments for our after church fellowship. Its an easy and great way to be involved. Thank You, Your Session



We will have our first class in Tai Chi January 16 at 10:00. Tai Chi is a very low impact exercise program that will exercise just about every muscle in your body. It isn't Yoga and much easier to do. It is the Yang style and has 24 moves if there are those who want to learn the form. We will focus on the 28-30 exercise moves. There is a 12 move exercise for arthritis we will learn. Wear comfortable clothes and bring a mask. We will distance ourselves at a safe distance. You will not sweat, or lose weight, or build body mass. It will stimulate pretty much all your muscles. It is very gentle and can be done in a wheel chair. It is effective however. I will provide a copy of all the exercises so you can do them each day from your home. Come and check it out.

### CONGREGATIONAL CARE TEAM— Prayer Concerns

**Ongoing Prayers** Jill Wheatley, Mark & Belinda Busscher, Rachel Grimmatt, Cathy King, Martha Phipps, Helen Escobedo, Betty Montgomery, Mike Wheatley, Wanda Cunningham, Evelyn Robison, Joy Dell DeWitt, Shelli Darnell, Patty Costanzo, and Diane Mize.

**Immediate Concerns** : The Family of Joe Rossano, Carol Beacham & family, Amy Newtz & family, the family of Jennie Bolton, and Mary Salazar.

*Please call the church office with updates.*

### JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Marcel Pannell	1
D.J McClendon	3
Dennis Ashley	3
Dick Tyson	3
Barbara Passmore	9
Dick Frerking	15
Stephanie Meystedt	20
Susanne Wilson	20
Cheryl Case	21
John Melenric	30
Ron Mercer	30



*Walt Disney*

**READ THRU THE BIBLE IN A YEAR** This well intentioned New Year Resolution often befalls to the seemingly unending begats and meticulous guidelines found in Leviticus.



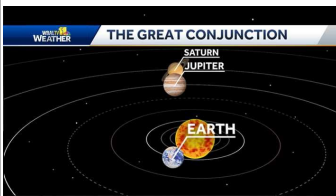
## Organist's Musings – Epiphany

### January 2021 – Christopher Lo

On the evening of December 21, I joined with throngs around the world going outdoors in search of the Great Conjunction. Andrea Leinfelder, a staff writer with the Houston Chronicle, wrote that on this evening, “Jupiter and Saturn have been inching closer together in the night sky. And on Monday, they’ll put on a show humanity hasn’t seen since 1226.” On this evening, although Jupiter and Saturn were hundreds of millions of miles apart in space, they looked in our night sky as though they were next-door neighbors.



Some scholars have theorized that the original Christmas star, known as the Star of Bethlehem, might also have been a great conjunction. Other theories aiming to explain this biblical phenomenon include a supernova explosion and a [comet](#). On January 6, in our church calendar, we celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany, the twelfth day of Christmas. Christians believe “the star they [the wise men] had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was” (Matthew 2:9). These wise men probably did not arrive on the scene until two years after the shepherds would have been long back in their fields.



Philo of Alexandria (20 BC - 50 AD), a Jewish philosopher wrote about a highly esteemed Eastern School of Magi who were Persians, successors of the Babylonians. These “μάγος” (Greek: magoi) – were astrologers, “wise men” in that sense. In the Western Christian tradition, they have been given names – Balthasar, king of Chaldea, Caspar, king of Tarshish, and Melchior, king of Nubia. Most likely, they were not even called kings. However, they followed a star to find Jesus.



The Reverend Mark Woods, a Baptist Minister and a former Managing Editor of “Christian Today,” suggested that “what is important in the Epiphany story is that the magi represent the coming of the Gentile nations to do homage to the Jewish Messiah, with all their wealth, power and wisdom. The magi symbolize His power over the wise and great just as the shepherds symbolize His care for the poor and humble.”



On December 12, 2020, the Food and Drug Administration issued the first emergency use authorization (EUA) for the [Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine](#). On December 17, the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine was also granted EUA status too.

In the December 23rd edition of the Houston Chronicle, the front page headline read “Texas poised to be nation’s next hot spot: latest forecast suggests trouble for Houston.” We pray that these vaccines may be for us, “the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it” (John 1:5).

Just as the Magi brought their gift to the infant Jesus our Lord, I pray that in 2021, we too may bring our unique gift to His Service.