



West District News

March, 2018



“Take heart!”

I have had the blessed privilege to visit the Holy Land four times. On each pilgrimage, our group went out on a boat on the Sea of Galilee (actually a fresh water lake) in northern Israel. Each time we would motor out to the middle of the lake, shut off the engines, and look out over the water as someone read one of the gospel stories of Jesus and his disciples on the Sea of Galilee. Most often we would read about Jesus calming the storm: *“Peace, be still.”*

Another story of Jesus on Galilee is told in Mark 6:45-52. Jesus had just fed the 5,000 and sent them – and the Twelve – away so he could be alone to pray. The disciples were in a boat and couldn’t cross the lake because a storm came up and the wind was against them. Jesus finished praying and set out across the lake himself, walking on the surface of the water. The disciples saw him walking on the lake and were terrified. They thought they were seeing a ghost and screamed in terror.

But Jesus called out to them: *“Take heart! It is I. Don’t be afraid.”*

Do you ever feel like you are stuck in a boat on the water in the middle of a raging storm? Our nation and church are divided. Our government is broken. Trust is shaken and truth doesn’t matter. And our children are being murdered in our schools. I’m sorry to paint such a dark picture, but sometimes this is how it feels. It’s enough to make us want to scream in terror.

And this is precisely when Jesus comes to us through the storm, saying, *“Take heart! It is I. Don’t be afraid.”*

The rest of the story is that Jesus got into the boat with the disciples, and the storm settled down. I trust and believe that Jesus is in the boat with us, as an encouraging and calming presence.

Jesus is telling us not to be afraid; and also, to be courageous: *Take heart!* We need to be courageous spiritual leaders of our congregations and communities. We are called to give hope to a disheartened world, to work for justice, to proclaim peace in the face of violence and faith in the face of fear.

Let us pray: *Lord Jesus, come to us in the storm, calm our fears, and help us to be your courageous servants. Amen.*

Be encouraged,

Andy

A Christian Greeting



"Haven't I commanded you; be strong and courageous? Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

Joshua 1:9

More often in these changing times, I forget these words of Wisdom! This past weekend, sixty women gathered at Camp Butman for an annual Ladies Retreat. Our Guest Speaker, Rachel Barrentine was not only an amazing speaker, she is a very talented musician, songwriter, author, and she also has the voice of an Angel. The theme was "Bold, Get Brave, Beat Fear, and Step out in Faith." In reading her book, my favorite quote to share is by Yahuda Berg called "Words", "Words are singularly the most powerful force available to humanity. We can choose to use this force constructively with words of encouragement, or destructively using words of despair. Words have energy and power with the ability to help, to heal, to hinder, to hurt, to harm, to humiliate and to humble."

Today, we could replace the word "despair" with the word "hate". God bless us all!

*More of Him, Less of Me,
Gini*

District Happenings: Send us your happenings!



San Angelo First United Methodist Church Christmas Offering is contributing \$8,000 to provide an Kohler electric generator and protective shed for The Wesley Clinic in Puerto Viejo, Costa Rica. The Houston Methodist Hospital had previously given them an Ultra Sound machine but they were needing a permanent source of electricity and will now be able to purchase a Kohler generator through the missionary work of Rev. Ray and Lydia Zirkle.

"Shush-Free" Service

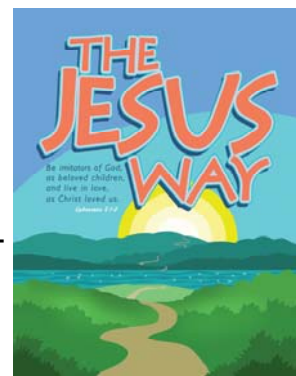
On the fourth Monday of every month at 7:00 p.m., those with special needs and their caregivers gather in the Chapel Hall at Sierra Vista United Methodist Church in San Angelo to worship in a loving, accepting, and shush-free setting. A traditional order of worship is followed, and those with special needs are encouraged to share their prayer concerns and are also given the opportunity to serve as acolytes, ushers, liturgists, and song leaders. The service is also followed by a time of fellowship that includes refreshments.



This service is organized in connection with the local Mosaic organization and is open to everyone, regardless of age or ability. In truth, many families enjoy the open and casual environment for their young children. For more information, please contact Kelly Duke at 325/944-4041 or kduke@sierravista.org.

2018 Summer Camp

We are writing to let you know about summer camp opportunities for West District kids. For the fourth year, Sierra Vista UMC, along with the staff and clergy from several other UMC congregations, is planning a children's camp at Butman Methodist Camp in Merkel, Texas, near Abilene. This camp has traditionally been offered to children who will be going into 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th grades in the fall, 2018, and we continue to target this age group.



However, this year, we are also adding **camping opportunities for middle-schoolers** who are entering 7th, 8th, and 9th grades in the fall. We are excited about this intergenerational ministry opportunity, but we are aware that some parts of camp should and will be separate for these various age groups. In truth, we are planning what we hope will be the best camp experience for all age groups.

We have thoroughly enjoyed our years at Butman Methodist Camp; it is updated and well maintained with many activities for children and youth, including high and low-ropes course challenges, a rock wall, a Gaga court (Israeli dodge ball), three indoor basketball courts, ping pong, sand volleyball, star gazing, geocaching, horseshoes and washer pitching, a truly impressive slip and slide, a water-balloon catapult, three hill crosses to hike to, Butman's homegrown "Garden of Eatin'," and an Olympic pool with a slide and a climbing feature over the deepest end. The kids absolutely LOVE all that there is to do at Camp Butman!

The camp fee will be \$250 per child, and the camp will be held August 5 through 9, a Sunday through Thursday. Our theme for camp this year will be "The Jesus Way," and the focused verse for this theme is "Be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us." (Ephesians 5:1-2).

For additional information and requirements, camper release and permission/registration forms for this camp are on the District webpage, www.umcwayoutwest.org.

In the meantime, here is additional camp information:

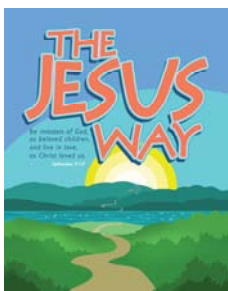
- To sign up for this camp, kids should be entering the third through ninth grades in fall, 2018.
- All children are welcome.
- Camp facilities are air-conditioned, though many activities are outside.
- There is a very nice swimming pool, and time each day will be scheduled for this.
- Other activities include crafts, games, Bible study, worship, hikes, feet-on-bunk time, and many others.
- Camp Butman has a cafeteria where kid-friendly meals will be served.
- There will be qualified medical personnel at camp to administer medications and first aid, if needed.
- Parents are welcome to organize carpools to get kids to camp, and we will also plan to take the Church bus(es).

Further, camp scholarships are available, in full and in part. If you need more information about camp fees and scholarships, please let me know.

Camp fees should not – in any way – limit your child's camp attendance!

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2018 Summer Camp



Finally, a number of Sierra Vista kids and adult volunteers will be there also. If you have or know of a responsible, hard-working, Jesus-loving youth who would like to serve as camp staff, we encourage their participation as well. Please have them get in touch with one of us so that we can walk them through the youth staff application process.

Church camps truly are a great experience for kids; they prove integral to their faith walks, both immediately and long-term. In truth, many experts in camp and retreat ministries claim that a week at camp is the equivalent of a year's worth of Sunday school classes. Please make an effort to start praying about your child's readiness to attend.

As ever, let us know if you have any questions!!

Kelly Duke

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Pastors and Professionals will meet Tuesday, March 20, 2018 at Sierra Vista United Methodist Church. We will gather at 9:30 a.m. and begin Worship at 10:00 a.m.

Remember, the cost of the day is \$10 per person which includes lunch, but does not just pay for lunch. Please contact the District Office if you have any questions or to RSVP.

The District Strategy Team will meet at 1:00 pm.

The **District Committee on Ordained Ministry** will hold annual interviews of Local Pastors and Candidates on Wednesday, April 4 and Thursday, April 5 at Sierra Vista UMC. The schedule will be set soon and times will be sent out. If you are expecting an interview with the dCOM please keep these dates open. Thank you!

Amy Moore
Registrar

Calendar

- Mar. 1-2 Cabinet Meeting
3 UMW District Meeting, Miles
6 District Committee on Ordained Ministry Training, 2:30-5:30 pm, Sierra Vista
6 Doug Hester Class, SA:FUMC, 11-2
6 Concho Country Emmaus Community Gathering, Sierra Vista UMC, 6:30 pm
20 Pastors and Professionals Meeting, 9:30 a.m., Sierra Vista UMC
23 Cabinet Meeting
26 Shush Free Worship, Sierra Vista UMC, 7:00 pm
28-29 Cabinet Meeting
30 District Office Closed
- Apr. 1 Easter
2 District Office Closed
3 Doug Hester Class, SA:FUMC, 11-2
3 Concho Country Emmaus Community Gathering, Sierra Vista UMC, 6:30 pm
4-5 dCOM Annual Interviews, Sierra Vista
9-18 Amy – Vacation / PAUMCS Conference
23 Shush-free Worship, Sierra Vista UMC, 7:00 p.m.
24 Pastors and Professionals Meeting, Big Lake, 9:00 a.m.
25-26 Cabinet Meeting

Check out the updated website at:
www.umcwayoutwest.org

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Early Response Team Basic Training will be held again in the West District on Saturday, May 5, 2018 at FUMC Brady. For more information or to register go to: www.RioTexasResponse.org and select FUMC Brady for the training site.

District Web-Page:

www.umcwayoutwest.org