



West District News

November, 2020



The Homestretch?

Friends, it feels like we're in the homestretch of the calendar year 2020, but not of some of the tumult this crazy year has brought us.

Homestretch is a term from horse racing that refers to the final straight stretch of the race track after the horses complete the final turn and thunder toward the finish line. Of course, we have all realized that we have not yet turned the final corner on the Coronavirus threat, nor on dismantling systemic racism in the US, nor on political division, nor on the uncertain future of the UMC.

I am reminded of Jesus, in chapter 9 of the Gospel of Luke: "When the days drew near for him to be taken up, [Jesus] set his face to go to Jerusalem." *Luke 9:51 NRSV*

Now there was still a lot left in Jesus' story and ministry. It will take about ten more chapters for Jesus and the Twelve to arrive in Jerusalem. But I love this phrase: *he set his face to go to Jerusalem*. It describes unshakable determination and focus.

Similarly, there is a lot left in our story and ministry as we continue the race that is set before us. I pray we can *set our faces to focus on Christ* in trying times we find ourselves in.

I don't have to tell you these are stressful days - we all see it - we all feel it. Just remember, we still follow Jesus Christ, who always chooses the path of love. May our words and actions reflect the light of Christ as we set our faces to go to Jerusalem with him.

Blessings and Peace,

Andy

Pastors and Professionals Meeting, November 12

Join us on Zoom for a joint West and Hill Country Districts Pastors and Professionals meeting on Thursday, November 12, 9:00 – 10:30AM. Rev. Karen Horan of the Rio Texas Conference will be our special guest to bring us some creative ideas for a Happy, Holy, Hybrid Christmas Eve. Be on the lookout for a special gift to arrive in the mail for your church from Karen and the Conference – but please don't open it until November 11, the day before our meeting.

This will be the first time in a long while that we will all gather together for worship, learning and fellowship, so please make every effort to attend and re-connect with your colleagues and friends. The Zoom ID is 997 3512 7255, password: UMC.

West District Charge Conference—2020

Sunday, December 6th at 4:00pm

Rev. Andy Smith, District Superintendent, will be hosting a Virtual Charge Conference. All churches in the West District will be meeting together by Zoom.

The conference will begin at 4 pm and Bishop Robert Schnase is scheduled to speak to us at 4:30 pm.

All Charge Conference forms are to be approved and perfected by the Administrative Council/Board and sent to the District Office by November 23rd with a copy of the minutes and any voting records you might have from the meeting.

Jozlin Parker from the Conference Office will be assisting with the zoom registration and meeting. By registering prior to the meeting, we will have a sign-in sheet. Please note how to register below:

You are invited to a Zoom meeting.
When: Dec 6, 2020 04:00 PM Central Time (US and Canada)

Register in advance for this meeting:
<https://riotexas.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJ0rfuqhqzlrHtyA1wj9zEIXGGUnBZ9MPCq4>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

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Rio Texas Conference #
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Mission. **BORDER HOPE**

Hello MBH friends, GREAT NEWS. MBH is serving asylum seekers again. Looks like it will be 100 a week or so. They are sheltering in the center. All community shelters were closed as a result of COVID 19. Pandemic restrictions have been lessened, but currently no volunteer teams are being requested. When Pastor Becky left she notified the Post Office and they closed the box. **New Box # is 7536, Eagle Pass 78853.** All mail was returned to sender. All food & clothing was dispersed to the Eagle Pass community since it had been there for a year. They are prepared to receive donations of clothing & non-perishable food again. I was in Eagle Pass 2 weeks ago to meet with Valeria & Pastor Leyva.

IMMEDIATE DONATION NEEDS:

1. New underwear for men & women underwear-small & medium
2. Female personal hygiene items, especially those for new mothers.
3. **Coats** for adults & children. Adults should be small & medium.
4. Rice - many coming at this time are from Haiti. Rice is to Haiti as tortillas are to Mexico.
5. Large refrigerator & chest type freezer.
6. Privacy fence to secure area where burned out parsonage was received.

We are not receiving Mission Teams at this time still due to COVID. Although the protocols have been lessened, we have no accommodations at this time for teams. They would have to stay in one of the motels.

We will be doing a **Virtual Mission Trip** (call me or Abel Vega for information) for our **Thanksgiving** Celebration this year. We are trying to put together a plan for Thanksgiving like we have done in previous years. If you or your church are interested in helping us with this please contact, Pam. (see information below)

If you want to schedule **delivery of donations**, if you have questions, or want more information contact me, Pam Elliott.

Pam Elliott
Hill Country District Program Director
830-325-6719
dispro512@gmail.com

A Word from Ken:



This past weekend was the United Methodist Men's annual conference, via Zoom. There were great speakers, wonderful music and loving ministry. I want to encourage you to join United Methodist Men and United Methodist Women, in your church and in the Rio Texas Conference. Let us show God's light into the world.

Dr. David Klinger said that there are only two teams in our world. Not Republican/Democrat or Liberal/Conservative or any other divisions. Only those that love God and those who don't. This is the main struggle in our world today.

The first step in healing our world is to realize that God loves us. Once we fully understand that we can then start to love our neighbor.

<https://riotexasumm.org/>

<https://www.umwriotexas.org/>

Blessings,

Ken



The Hill Country District is inviting everyone to participate in their Advanced Course they are offering on Saturday, November 7 from 8:00 - 4:00 p.m. called "Leading in Public Prayer." If you are wondering what leading in public prayer might entail in your church, think of 'Prayers of the People' you might be called to lead in Sunday morning worship. Many churches have a Psalm (along with Scriptures from O.T. and N.T.) and the prayer leader creates a prayer for the congregation using the Psalm.

Class description:

Praying in public can be daunting, but prayer is something one learns. This course on praying in public will help the participant grow in confidence and skill in public prayer and enrich their personal prayer life. Prayer is something we learn; it is something that can be taught. For many, however, the only teaching about prayer they ever receive is modeled in Sunday worship. This course may challenge some of your assumptions, test some of your preconceived ideas, stretch your thinking, and enrich your prayer life. It will, at the very least, present you with an opportunity to grow in the discipline of leading public prayer.

The following Student Handbook is required: (Please order for yourself)

Shaping the Prayers of the People : The Art of Intercession

Samuel Wells and Abigail Kocher

Available at Cokesbury, Amazon

To register for this class, use this link:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/leading-in-public-prayer-tickets-120092721563?utm-medium=discovery&utm-campaign=social&utm-content=attendeeshare&aff=escb&utm-source=cp&utm-term=listing>

For one person, the cost is \$6.94.

Please let me know if you have any questions. We look forward to meeting with you on Saturday, November 7 from 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.!!

Pam Elliott

Hill Country District

Program Director

dispro512@gmail.com

NOVEMBER

Calendar:



- 1 Daylight Saving Time Ends
- 3 Concho Country Emmaus Gathering, 6:30 p.m., Sierra Vista UMC
- 3 Coffee with Andy, Zoom, 8:30 a.m.
- 4-6 Andy—TMF DS Group Meeting
- 7 Hill Country Lay Servant Training
- 10 Coffee with Andy, Zoom, 8:30 a.m.
- 12 Joint West and Hill Country District P&P by Zoom, 9-10:30 a.m.
- 17 Coffee with Andy, Zoom, 8:30 a.m.
- 18-19 Cabinet Meeting
- 24 Coffee with Andy, Zoom, 8:30 a.m.
- 25-27 District Office Closed

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Rio Texas Conference
United Methodist Church

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