

# West District News

March, 2021



## Wear a Mask; Show You Care

Hello, friends. I pray you are faring well (and have sufficiently thawed out!). Robyn and I are well. Like most of you, we experienced a few days mostly without electricity during a deep freeze, and without water. It was a minor inconvenience, but we recovered pretty quickly and we fared better than many of our neighbors. Fun fact: it snowed four times in Kerrville between New Year's Eve and February 18.

Our family has also been blessed that no one in our immediate families has tested positive for Covid-19, and most of the vulnerable adults in our circle have been vaccinated. (I will receive my second dose next week – Yay!) We attribute our good fortune to the safety protocols we observe. We avoid public gatherings, restaurants, stores, etc., as much as we can. We practice social distancing when we are around others, and practice rigorous hand hygiene. And I never go out in public without a mask – or two – covering my mouth and nose.

There is a new statement from the Bishop and Cabinet about Covid safety. You can see it here: <https://riotexas.org/news/2021/3/3/cabinet-statement-regarding-gov-abbotts-recent-executive-order>.

Also, the Conference office has picked up some of the statement's language to make the following announcement about continued precautions at the Conference Center:

*On March 2<sup>nd</sup>, Governor Abbott announced lifting the state-wide mask mandate and public capacity limits effective March 10<sup>th</sup>. At the same time, the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has warned that relaxing protective measures now could subject the country to a “fourth surge.”*

*While the number of cases has dropped after the holidays, and COVID testing has become much more accessible, many in our community are still waiting on vaccines, and broad community protection from the virus is still weeks or months away.*

*Therefore, based on the guidance of the Centers for Disease Control, the Rio Texas Conference Office will continue to maintain current safety protocols, including requiring all staff and visitors to wear masks in the building. Please be assured, the Conference remains steadfast in our safety protocols in mitigating the spread of COVID-19 especially as variants of the virus emerge.*

*We appreciate your continued efforts to keep safe by wearing masks, maintaining social distancing, temperature checks, and washing hands frequently.*

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| 2021 Annual Conference          | 3 | I share this as a template you may want to modify for use at your church, if your church leadership determines to observe such protocols, which I strongly recommend you do. |
| Calendar                        | 4 | I wear a mask because I care about the health and well-being of folks around me, and for my own protection. It is simple and proven.   |
| West District Contact Info      | 4 | Blessings and Peace,<br><i>Andy</i>  |

**Are you considering a call to ministry? You will need to attend . . .**

## **Candidacy Summit JULY 16-17, 2021**

**All Applications** must be submitted electronically to Alicia Leyva,  
[alicial@riotexas.org](mailto:alicial@riotexas.org) **no later than JUNE 16, 2021. NO EXCEPTIONS.**

**PLEASE NOTE:** This includes approval from your District Superintendent via copy of signed Candidacy Summit application or via email sent directly to Alicia Leyva by your District Superintendent.

More information and applications can be found at:

<https://riotexas.org/candidacy-summit>

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### **Notes from Ken**



“Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity.”

1 TIMOTHY 5: 1-2

I've been the Program Coordinator for almost a year now. I started around the same time as the COVID outbreak. Coincidence? Hopefully not. For me, this has been a very strange year. It's very interesting, starting a new job and working for 6 days and then working from home for the next year. I have hated for us to be away from each other but I am so proud in how everyone has found new ways to continue their ministries. From children's programs to youth to senior adult ministries. You all have proved that a pandemic or snowmagedon is not bigger than our God. I continue to pray that we will be back together soon and able to hug each other. I am looking forward to us getting back to in person groups and trainings. Keep up the great work.

Blessings!  
Ken

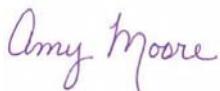
## Ministry through Administration

Many changes have taken place over the years since I have been at the District Office, and one of the things that has occurred is the use of email to communicate almost everything. We try to update email addresses as often as possible, but we still don't have everyone's correct email address, or if we do, their settings are such that emails won't go through if sent in a group. This means our newsletter may not reach those interested in receiving it or those who are serving as a committee chairs or lay leaders in our churches.

I am asking for your help in getting our information out. If churches receive changes in email addresses, can you please let me know?

Some issues were discovered last year with emails sent out for the called Annual Conference and I would like to make sure this doesn't happen again, if at all possible. Please add my [westdistrict@riotexas.org](mailto:westdistrict@riotexas.org) email address as one of your accepted email addresses and I will begin sending information to our delegates, so we can hopefully get this done. Thank you for all your help!

Let's stay connected,



## Lay Servant Ministries Course



Rev. Janet Larson at First UMC in Eldorado will be leading "Rediscovering Our Spiritual Gifts", an advanced course in Lay Servant / Speaker Training, for her congregation. She would like to offer this to those in the West District who are interested. She plans to begin the first Wednesday evening in April. The course will be offered in person and by zoom. If you are interested in this course or for more information, please contact Janet, 512/626-8441.

## 2021 (Virtual) Annual Conference

Our 2020-2021 Annual Conference year is in full swing, and ministry continues to impact lives and communities in the name and power of Jesus. As the Rio Texas Conference continues to be impacted by the COVID-19 virus, and the number of persons infected by the virus continues to grow, leaders from throughout the Conference have discussed the effect that this may have on conducting the 2021 Annual Conference in June. After discussions with the Uniting Table, the Cabinet, Bishop Schnase, and other district and conference leaders, it has been decided that we will hold a virtual 2021 Annual Conference. Planning is already underway. Our session will incorporate learnings and feedback from our virtual Annual Conference in October 2020, including a new voting system, improved processes for delegates to be recognized from the (virtual) floor, and opportunities for delegates to connect with one another. Information on these tools will be posted on the website and emailed to delegates as planning develops, so preparations can be made for our virtual time together.

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*The United Methodist Church*

**We're on the web!**

**[www.umcwayoutwest.org](http://www.umcwayoutwest.org)**

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## Calendar

March	1-2	Clergy Convocation
	2-3	Cabinet Meeting
	2	Concho Country Emmaus Gathering, Sierra Vista UMC, 6:30 p.m.
	9	West District Committee on Ordained Ministry Interviews
	10-11	Cabinet Meeting
	15-19	Amy—Vacation
	16	Coffee with Andy
	18	Cabinet Meeting
	23	Coffee with Andy
	24-25	Cabinet Meeting
	30	Coffee with Andy
	31	Cabinet Meeting
April	2-5	District Office Closed, Easter
	6	Coffee with Andy
	6	Concho Country Emmaus Gathering, Sierra Vista UMC, 6:30 p.m.
	7-8	Cabinet Meeting
	13	West District Committee on Ordained Ministry Interviews
	14	Cabinet Meeting
	15-17	Amy—Virtual PAUMCS Conference
	20	Coffee with Andy
	21	Cabinet Meeting
	27	Coffee with Andy
	28-30	Andy—DS Group