

# Crossroads Newsletter

April 2024

Huntsville, Tx



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## LIFE TOGETHER

I was listening to the radio the other day – and I heard a discussion on the First Amendment, hate speech, and the ethics of the press. I wondered: does the First Amendment apply to how people get to express themselves in church? Where is the line between tolerance and intolerance when it comes to the words and actions that we choose as people of faith?

After reflecting on this, I remembered a paper I wrote while doing my doctoral studies regarding healthy and unhealthy churches. The conclusion I reached was: “Healthy churches tend to have low tolerance for inappropriate behavior, while unhealthy churches tolerate all kinds of outrageous things, including words and actions that (at least in the past) would not be tolerated anywhere else.” Here are few examples of inappropriate behaviors:

- When people demand to have their personal needs and wants met – over and against the church's mission. Because congregations are mission-driven organizations, this behavior is inappropriate.
- When folks spread conflict in thousands of ways instead of dealing directly with the person who is frustrating them. Instead, they spread negativity throughout the congregation.
- When members circumvent the accepted governing and decision-making structures to push a personal agenda.
- When folks use bullying behaviors (e.g., name-calling, verbal attacks, gossip). If it's not OK on the playground at school it's not OK in the congregation.
- When people withhold money as a way of pressuring the organization into giving them their way.
- When people take their toys and go home without any conversation at all.

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For some reason, we tend to rationalize and try to justify the inappropriate actions of others, and not realizing the negative light shed on the whole congregation. We tend to:

- Excuse those who behave badly. The most common phrase I hear is: “Well, that’s just [fill in the name]. S/he has been like that for years.” This is really frustrating. Just because the behavior has been tolerated in the past doesn’t make it right.
- Freezing up when somebody acts out. People may complain later – out in the parking lot or on the phone with a friend – but don’t hold one another accountable to any standard of behavior.

Congregations that tolerate bad behavior are more consumer-oriented rather than mission-driven. They have created a social club where people are not being led and challenged to grow in their spiritual journey – even though there are concerted efforts to help someone along their spiritual journey.

With the intense divisiveness in our country, congregations are well-positioned to show a different way of being together, meeting real needs and building connections across the divides. Seems when we have hurricanes, earthquakes, and wildfires – folks come together to help each other out. But I wonder why it takes a crisis to pull us together – and I’m not alone.

Peace,

*Craig*



**April Birthdays**

3	Emily Evans
5	Gwynn Durham
11	Shannon Krempin
14	Beckie Riddell
15	Tabitha Srader
22	Fran Crawford
24	Earleen Offutt
24	Rion Cascaden
29	Don Burton

## Wednesday Nights

### Dinners

Resume on April 3rd @ 5:30 p.m.  
Don't miss out on an amazing meal and fellowship!

### Choir@ 6 p.m.

If you are interested in singing in the choir, contact Michael McDougal.

## Finance Report

### YTD as of FEB 29, 2024

Actual giving to Budget	16,603
Other income	14,040
Transferred from reserves	11,192
Actual Budget expense	21,457
Under Budget	929
2024 Annual Budgeted expenses	268,632


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## May Newsletter

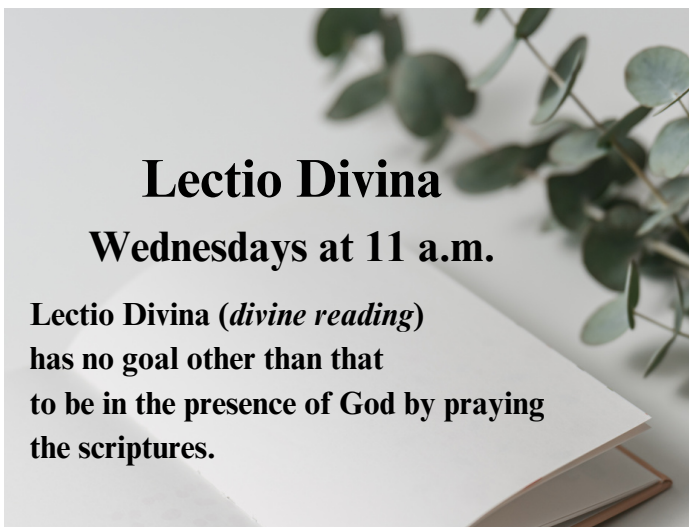
### Articles

### Due

No Later Than  
Tuesday, April 23rd.



**Book Club**  
**Wednesday, April 10**  
**8:30 a.m.**  
**“The Patron Saint of Liars”**  
by Ann Patchett  
“A complex character study of a woman  
driven by forces she can neither  
understand nor control.”



**Lectio Divina**  
**Wednesdays at 11 a.m.**

Lectio Divina (*divine reading*)  
has no goal other than that  
to be in the presence of God by praying  
the scriptures.

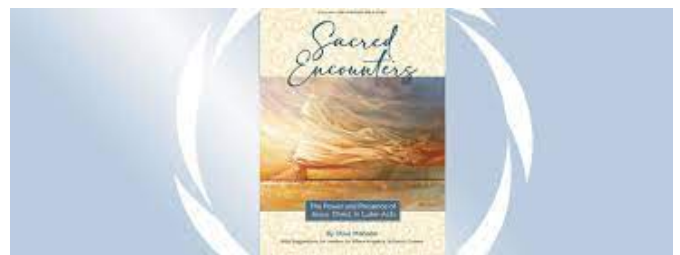
## Congregational Worship

Thank you to the Congregational Nurture Team for hosting the reception following the Memorial Service for the family of Mary Moore. Many hearts and hands helped to plan, decorate, provide food and clean up. Everyone was greatly appreciated by the CWT and by the Moore family. Also, home visitations are being made by members of the CWT. Both the visitor and the visited are blessed. If you know of someone who might like to be visited, please let Meredith Clifton know.

## Sacred Encounters A Women’s Bible Study

Our April meeting will cover Lesson 6 (*A Person with a Physical Disability Encounters Jesus*) from Acts 3: 1-10. God calls us to affirm that each person is a child of God who should be treated with dignity and equity.

Join us on Wednesday, April 17, at 10 a.m. for Bible study and fellowship in the Parlor. For more information, contact Brenda.



## Four for Four

Because of **YOUR** generosity, First Presbyterian Church of Huntsville, Texas has become a Four for Four congregation, participating in all four annual Special Offerings, joining Presbyterians around the corner and around the world in mission, sharing God’s grace and endless love.

**THANK YOU** for your commitment!

Rev. Wilson Kennedy, Associate Director for Special Offerings and Appeals Ministry Engagement and Support, PCUSA

Reverend Lemuel Garcia-Arroyo, Ministry Engagement Advisor, PCUSA.

# HIGH NOON MUSIC

Tuesday, April 9  
Noon

An appreciation  
offering will be  
taken.  
All proceeds will go  
to the guest artist.



A sign up list will be in the Fellowship Hall for items needed for the Mission Day Camp, June 3-6.

Items needed vary from food - craft items - material - outreach items and more!

Your donations of items, volunteered time, creativity, and especially prayer are greatly appreciated.

If you have questions, please contact Genevieve Brown or Brenda Brock.

## One Great Hour of Sharing Restoring Hope, Feeding the Hungry, Empowering the Oppressed

For 75 years, One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) has been the single, largest way Presbyterians come together to make a difference in the world. How does this offering impact local, national and international communities?

\$3.1 million was granted by Presbyterian Disaster Assistance in 27 states in the U.S. and 35 countries around the globe.

\$1.2 million in the form of 90 grants from the Presbyterian Hunger Program helped to address hunger in 22 countries, including the U.S.

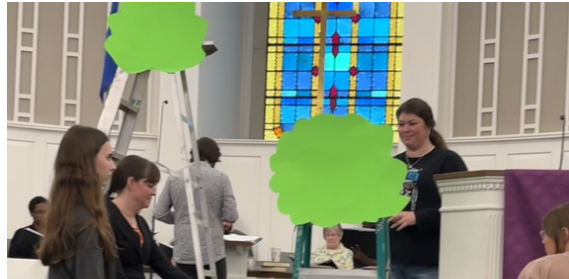
56 partners were supported by the Self-Development of People: 19 national partners, 26 mid council partners and 11 international partners all partnered with communities to overcome oppression and injustice.

The One Great Hour of Sharing offering was taken on Easter Sunday, but if you did not get the chance to support the offering - it's not too late! Always remembering - *together we can do a lot!*

# The Tale of Three Trees

Thank you to the children, youth, choir, Castyn Bohan, Meghan Burton, Michael McDougal and David Fleming for their sharing of *The Tale of Three Trees*.

Everyone did such a great job. The music was beautiful and the “story” helps us to remember that everyone has a calling from God - we just have to be willing to “answer the call.” Enjoy the pictures!



# YOUTH SUNDAY

SUNDAY, APRIL 21

## WHO AM I?

Youth will plan and lead worship as they share scripture, prayer, music, and more from when they attended the Presbyterian Youth Conclaves Retreat.

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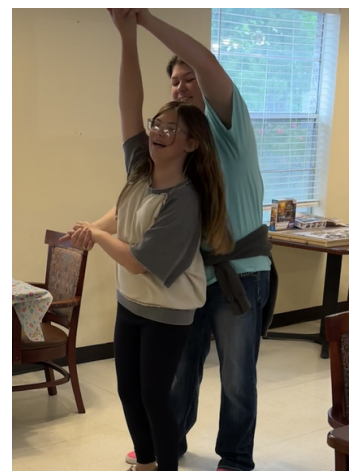
### Food Pantry

The Food Pantry is in need of non-perishable food items. Items such as canned meats, mac & cheese, soups, peanut butter crackers, fruit cups, small jars of peanut butter and jelly.

More and more people are “visiting” our Food Pantry and Blessing Box - grandparents raising grandchildren and sometimes great-grandchildren, college students, even staff from area schools are in need of help sometimes,

As always many thanks to St. Stephen Episcopal Church for all their donations!

**Focus Care Easter Festival - Thank you to all who helped make goodie bags and to those who helped at the festival.**



**Join us April 26th  
for Prom Party at  
Focus Care.**



## Building & Grounds

B&G has been busy repairing doors and fascia boards and working in the flower beds and prayer garden.

Batteries have been changed in all smoke detectors, air filters have been changed out, light fixtures have been changed out and repaired and door locks have been oiled.

Look for more information coming regarding an all-church work day!

## Christian Education

Develop the habit of asking questions as you read the Bible. Here are some sample questions to use:

- Who wrote the book, and what can we learn about the author?
- Who are the main characters in this passage?
- What is the period of history?
- Does God speak and/or act in the passage, and if so what did He say or do?
- What does the passage reveal of God's character?
- Are there any commands in these verses we need to heed?

## Thank You!

Thank you to Pastor Craig and the Worship Ministry Team for all their planning and implementing special services during Lent and Holy Week - beginning with Ash Wednesday, Lenten Devotionals, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday - and don't forget the Cross-Eyed sermons and the cross built by Craig, the beautiful Easter lilies, and all the special music - reminding us all of Jesus' life on earth, His passion and His resurrection!