



## **Clergy Reports (February 2024)**

### ***Pastor Reggie***

Thinking about conversations we had prior to January about upcoming sermon series, I remember how we thought it would be important to begin the year with a discussion of who we are, and maybe more importantly, what we believe. Hence the title of our first series for 2024. And I am really glad we did that, as I believe that it was all that I hoped it would be; thought-provoking, engaging, enlightening, and most of all, an authentic perspective as to who we are as a church and who we strive to be as Christ Followers. I am really glad we did this, and I pray you are glad as well.

As we move into the Lenten Season, you will begin to see a real focus on discipleship and spiritual growth, in all areas and across all platforms. In order to continue to do the work before us in accomplishing our mission, we will need to become stronger individually and collectively in these areas. As I said last month (and will probably be saying next month too!), in all of our sermon series, all of our programming, all of our missional opportunities, and all of everything else we do, we are not moving from our belief that we are required to Love God and Love Others. And so, we will continue to work on learning to do just that.

I would like to say again how very thankful I am for our church leadership, as should you be. We are blessed to have a group of committed people; committed to Jesus, committed to this church, and committed to you. If you have any questions or comments, and for whatever reason you can't reach one of our pastors or directors, please feel free to contact any of them. They are as plugged in as any group I have ever worked with. In fact, it is evident to me that even though these people are responsible for the administration of the church, they primarily focus on the areas of ministry, mission and outreach, our spiritual growth as a church, our hospitality as a church, and what ways we can be looking forward to enhance our ability to accomplish our mission as a church. It's not that way everywhere, and I do not take this for granted!

Keep in mind that as you hear from Thea and John and from me, we are blessed because we all get to do what we do because of your willingness to support us and support our efforts. I thank you for being a church that is focused on walking in Jesus' footsteps. We will continue on this journey together.

## ***Pastor Thea***

In *Deep Roots, Wild Branches*, Rev. Michael Beck (Director of Fresh Expressions, UMC) offers a both/and reality of the future church where our current church models and programming will coexist alongside newly planted and growing Jesus communities. As current Christians lean into the places and ways people curious and longing for faith already gather, we can bring our coveted connection and discipleship to those seeking new life beyond our walls. It is this promise of both “deep roots” of the church life we know and love thriving alongside “wild branches” of not yet imagined gatherings of people seeking Jesus that drives the Outreach movement at FUMC Pearland. While we will continue to invite, encourage and celebrate our current ways of doing church, I am also inviting us to dream, seek and notice pockets for potential Jesus communities by first taking our own connections and conversations out into the world, where those looking for hope reside.

## **Celebrate**

Our five week trial run at Torchy’s Tacos, “Let’s Taco-bout Our Faith” was a great start to taking our Jesus talk to the streets. With an average of 12 people meeting each week, our conversations were filled with thought provoking questions, firm disagreements and delicious tacos shared between new and old friends. It was a lesson in how these conversations can happen with and without prompts, and how they offer deeper insight to what we believe, even when we disagree. We had both returning and new to the group each week, including those looking for deeper connection.

This same conversation and participation bled into NewSong worship this month, as each week I offered those present to submit anonymous questions about faith to be answered live from the stage. Those questions proved our disciples are also curious, longing and disagree on many things. The youth panel held on Sunday Feb 11th in worship, also shed some light on what our young people really want and need from a church community: real connection and deep discipleship through relationships. Without prompting, they shared their truth on what matters most, and what it is we are already doing that makes the deepest impact.

## **Next Steps**

The population in West Pearland and South on Hwy 288 continues to explode, with a handful of our current worship participants driving over 25 minutes to our location regularly. Those same people are living next to and in community with many others who may also be seeking a deeper connection, a source of hope and the affirmation that while they might see the world differently, they too are accepted and worthy to be redeemed. In March, we will offer an opportunity for those current worshippers to gather closer to home, talk openly about their faith and dare to dream about some “wild branch” reaching to their neighbors and communities.

If you or someone you know is interested in learning more about these outreach experiments, please contact me to set some time together to dream.

### ***Pastor John***

In one of the episodes of Ted Lasso, Ted gives us a great lesson by saying, “You should be curious.” When you are curious, you ask questions. When you ask questions, you get to know people. Don’t assume things, but truly get to know others. People are worth pouring into, and this is the beginning of our Discipleship Journey. That is why Building Real Relationships is a part of our mission statement. In the past month, all Age-level Ministries have been doing that.

Men’s and Women’s Ministries held events with over 40 participants in both. The Men’s Ministry met on February 2nd at Magnolia Cajun Kitchen and the Women’s Ministry had a Galentine’s party hosted by Emily Besser on February 9th. Both of these events included people from both Traditional and NewSong, and other guests.

OWLS(Older, Wiser, Loving, Seniors) Ministry is having a St. Patrick's Day Party on March 20th. We will have soda, bread, shepherd's pie, and entertainment by folk singers and storytellers. OWLS are planning events every other month and are encouraged to invite friends and neighbors to join them.

PearlandKIDS is hosting a Parent's Night Out on Friday, February 16th. There are 43 children signed up to attend, including children that are already a part of PearlandKids Ministry, and also includes MOPS and MCP families due to Shannon Garza extending a direct invitation.

Student Ministry has been reaching out, and we have been ministering to around 35 students a Sunday. PSM currently has two students who are in conversation with pastors about baptism and have been seeing new students almost weekly. We have seen significant participation in our girls' and guys' Sunday School and continue to have great leaders in our small groups on Sunday mornings.

All of our Age-Level Ministries realize that there is still work to be done. Each ministry continues to reach out and take steps to make FUMC the place that Follows Jesus, Builds Real Relationships, Grows in Real Discipleship, and Experiences Real Transformation.