



# ELEMENTS

## January Newsletter

2023



### Patti's Ponderings

The first Sunday of January, we celebrated Epiphany, which is when we remember the magi, travelers from the east, who traveled a long way, led by a star, to honor the newborn King, Jesus. You can read their story in Matthew 2:1-12. Inspired by the star that guided these wise men, a tradition of "Star Words" has arisen. It is a word you receive, that God may use, to guide you throughout the year. Some star words are very comforting such as serenity or grace. Other star words are more challenging such as restraint or perseverance. Other star words are more exciting like adventure or creativity. Most of the words have multiple angles, such as forgiveness can imply being forgiven or forgiving others. There are two ways you can get your own star word. First, I have 50 or so stars in a basket outside my office. You can select one for yourself. I suggest you choose at random, don't rifle through them and find the one you want. Or you can click on this link and a word will be generated for you: <https://perchance.org/starwords2022>

Write the word down. Process the word a bit. What are synonyms of the word? What are the variety of meanings for the word? Put the word in a place you will be reminded of it. Reflect. Consider. Ask the Spirit to bring this word to mind when you need it as you journey through this year.

And, share your experiences with your star word. Let me and others know how God uses the word to guide you through the year.

Eugene Peterson translated Proverbs 3:4-5 this way:

Trust GOD from the bottom of your heart;  
don't try to figure out everything on your own.  
Listen for GOD's voice in everything you do, everywhere you go;  
he's the one who will keep you on track.

I believe God uses many different means to guide us. We can hear God's voice in everything we do and everywhere we go when we are attentive. May your star word be one way you connect with God this year.

*Grace for the journey,  
Pastor Patti*



# CHILDREN & FAMILY

## *Children and Family Ministries*

**Welcome to 2023!!!!**

**Breakfast with Santa was a big success, and all were excited to have Santa Lee back. Thank you to Mrs. Claus Nancy.**



We had about 150 or more come through our door. Special Thank You's: Men's Group for funding the breakfast snacks and setup/cleanup; UWF for providing hot dishes & setup/cleanup, Youth for setup/cleanup and cooking pancakes; Debbie S. for running crafts; and all that helped with set up and tear down. Kids enjoyed making reindeer food to help the reindeer and Santa find their house.



## Our Children's Christmas Program

"A Small Christmas" was a wonderful story told by our children at SHUMC. We had 23 children participating. Thank you to Pastor Virginia for writing the program, the parents for helping kids with their lines, the AV team, Gwen & Becky for the music, and all that helped!!!!



**Sunday school:** No Sunday School on January 1<sup>st</sup>, we will resume classes on January 8<sup>th</sup> and will move all kids down to the lower level. More details will come out in our family email. Let [Crystal](#) know if you need to be added to the email list.

## Preschool Celebration



We had our end-of-year Preschool Christmas Celebration where the children sang 5 Christmas songs, and we served dinner. It was bittersweet to close our Preschool. We had 150 preschool moms, dads, grandparents, and siblings in attendance. Thank you so much to John Tedrick for taking the lead in the kitchen to cook. Thank you also to our many hands who helped: Fred Isernhagen, Fred Thompson, Mike Pula, Lee Honnen, Bob Kerbs, Alan Legleiter, Pam Huntzinger, Wendy Hanson, Becky Stevens, Patti Agnew, Chad & Marta Neilson, and Len Brass. Thank you to the members of the congregation who brought food in.

**December 24<sup>th</sup> Christmas Eve**, Children & Family Service – We retold the Christmas story as the children made animal, people and object sounds. We handed out glowsticks and candy canes to all.

It was a blessing to be back in the building full-time and being able to bring back all these fun events for our families.

More fun to come in 2023!!!!!!!



## **Undie Sunday will take place on Feb. 12<sup>th</sup>**

The Children and Family Ministries team will be collecting new children's underwear and socks for needy children at local elementary schools. We will start collecting in January. Donations can be dropped off on Sunday mornings from 8:00 -11:30 am or Monday through Friday from 9:00 am -2:00 pm.

Please place new socks and underwear for children in the wagon by the Upper Room in the Gathering Space. We donate to schools in Arapahoe, Denver, and Adams counties.

Thank You for your support!



### **Healthy Refreshment Ideas for Gathering Space on Sunday Mornings**

Remember to consider those who are trying to maintain a healthy weight and also be a good example of healthy eating for our children! Also, provide sanitary (reduced handling) servings.

- Fruit bites on toothpicks or colorful fruit kabobs
- Vegi tray with bite size cherry tomatoes, baby carrots, etc.
- Bowl of nuts with a spoon for self-serving
- Small portion sweets such as donut holes or mini muffins, small cookies or bars, bite size wrapped candies



### King Food Ministry

The King Food Ministry comes every Thursday morning at 9:15 a.m. outside at the Gazebo when the weather is nice and in the hallway outside Celebration Hall when the weather isn't nice. Safeway donates perishable items like eggs, yogurt, and lots of baked goods, the Olive Garden donates frozen soups and lasagna, and McDonalds donates frozen breakfast foods. There is **always more** than we can give away, so please spread the word or come and pick up some food for yourself or someone you know that could use some! ***Be sure to get here early or on time!***

### Medical Equipment

We have various medical equipment such as crutches, walkers, canes, scooters, and shower chairs in the church basement. These items are loaned out for as long as you need them! If you or someone you know needs this kind of equipment, you can come to the church, sign out what you need, and then return it when you're done.

If we don't have what you need, try Hospital Equipment Lending Program (HELP):

**Website:** [www.assistanceleague.org/denver/](http://www.assistanceleague.org/denver/)

**Email:** [aldenverhelp@gmail.com](mailto:aldenverhelp@gmail.com).

**Phone:** 720 598-6126

Appointment scheduling, click [HERE](#)

## Help Spread the Word – Join the SHUMC Team

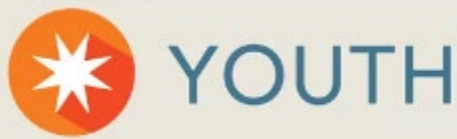
# Now Hiring SHUMC Finance Director

To apply, submit a cover letter and resume to [churchsecretary@smokyhillumc.org](mailto:churchsecretary@smokyhillumc.org)

See Job Description for details



303-690-9816



**Happy New Year to all! We are looking forward to an amazing 2023 – within our church, and in this amazing group of young people and adult sponsors.**

LOTS of Christmas fun was had this past month! First, we went out in cars (3 teams) to buy new shoes for those in need to help with the Mission Team's Wholly Kicks tree, which turned into an epic Christmas photo scavenger hunt! Good to get out of our comfort zones a little. See the craziness for yourself...



Hug a total stranger!



Pic with a Santa and blue Christmas lights



Fit your whole group in a tight space



Buy hot chocolate for someone you don't know!



Group Jump!



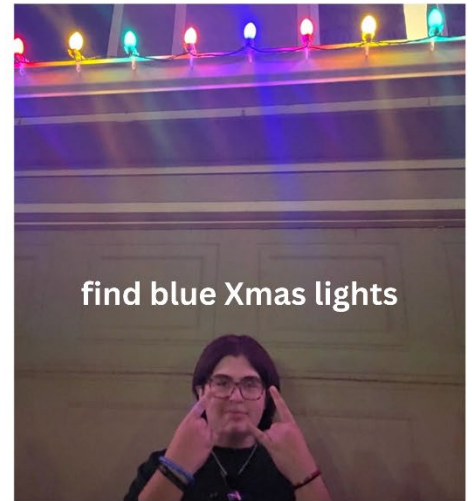
Group Jump!



Find a personalized license plate (and it was perfect!)



find a nutcracker



find blue Xmas lights

6 awesome youth came and helped with Breakfast with Santa. They helped with setup, crafts, cleanup – and Will Dosch got to be Santa’s story page turner – quite the honor. (I think that’s higher on the Santa corporate ladder than an elf...? Pretty epic, regardless!)

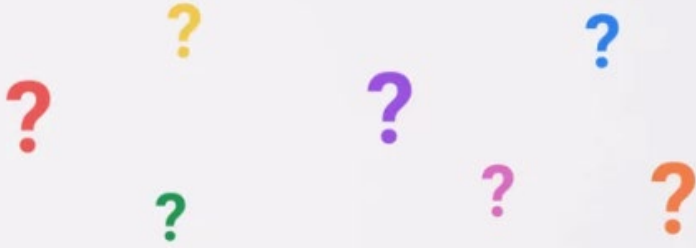


Our very first Youth Gift Wrapping Fundraiser was great! We didn't have a ton of gifts to wrap, but in classic SHUMC support style we raised a good chunk for our mission fund for retreats / mission trips and enjoyed being elves that morning! Thank you SO MUCH to all of you who helped us raise money that morning! Later that night we had fun at our youth Christmas party. Played some games and had our annual gift exchange.





# Let's Talk About...



*“Let’s Talk About...” is a column in our monthly newsletter where we will learn one thing at a time about how we can love others the way they want to be loved. We will learn something each month that helps us understand and respect people who are different from us a little more deeply.*

## Let’s Talk About Interfaith Dialogue

January 6th is Epiphany, when we traditionally celebrate the arrival of the wise men who came from the east to pay homage to the newborn king of the Jews. I love this holiday because of the challenge it offers us. One of the few things we can know with some certainty about these men (we don’t even know how many of them there were! We know there were three *gifts*, but Matthew does not specify the number of men who brought them) is that they were not Jews. They certainly were not Christians, a term that would not be invented for a few decades yet. But here they are, in our nativity scenes, witnessing the arrival of the Son of God as a human baby. And given that they returned to their home country after presenting their gifts, somehow I doubt they would know anything about Jesus’ message in order to convert.

That brings us to what I love about Epiphany: It invites us to talk about interfaith relationships. So, let’s do that! First, I need to clear up the difference between interfaith and ecumenical. Ecumenical dialogue is between different factions of the same religion. When we collaborate with the church next door, that’s ecumenical. Interfaith dialogue is between people of different religions. When we as a church collaborate with a synagogue or a mosque, that would be interfaith cooperation.

So the question is, *how* do we approach people who practice different religions? If we believe that Jesus is “the way, the truth and the life,” then aren’t we obliged to do our best to make sure everybody else knows that so they can be saved, too?

I can offer a short answer, but if you want a comprehensive one, you’re gonna have to take a systematic theology class. The super-short answer is, no. As Christians, we are obliged to love our neighbors as ourselves, which means loving them as they can understand and receive love (because of course we want the kind of love we can understand and receive!) If you’d like a slightly longer and headier answer, read on:

It’s possible salvation is limited to those who know about and profess faith in Jesus. It’s also possible salvation is more universal than that. It’s also possible our faith is one of many different ways God has connected with people in our world. We cannot know for sure how God interacts with people of other faiths. It seems to me, from my interactions with deeply faithful people of different traditions, that they are certainly onto something life-giving, and since I believe only God is the source of life, that is enough for me. We *do* know that God loves all people. So as we interact with those who believe differently from us, let’s be respectful, curious, and of course, authentic about our own faith experience.

For a deeper (but still very approachable) reflection on the rationale and value of interfaith dialogue, I invite you to read Carl McColman’s article on the topic. <https://anamchara.com/unknowing/interfaith-friendly/>

*Our “Let’s Talk About...” column is one place where we can help one another learn how to be better allies for all our neighbors. If you have a question you’d like answered, or if there are things you wish others in our congregation better understood about your own marginalized identities or those for whom you are already a strong ally, please submit suggestions to <https://forms.gle/E9eRqZJGLgVagbDZ9> or email me directly at [virginiag@smokyhillumc.org](mailto:virginiag@smokyhillumc.org).*



### **Aurora Warms the Night**



We will continue to collect hand warmers for Aurora Warms the Night during the winter months. If you can't purchase hand warmers, you can make a donation to the church with AWTN in the memo and the Mission Team will purchase them. Thank you for providing warmth to those without homes.

### **Thank You! Thank You! Thank You!**

- To all our volunteers who helped pack at Colorado Feeding Kids this year.
- To everyone who gave a gift through Heifer. We will have totals soon.
- To everyone who purchased tennis shoes for Wholly Kicks.
- To everyone who gave to 3 Gifts. We will have totals soon.
- For all your support of our families from Afghanistan.
- To everyone who has supported our food ministry program for Aurora Interfaith and our Spanish congregation.
- To everyone who supported Marti's Food Pantry.
- To all who provided lunches, socks, and hand warmers for Aurora Warms the Night.

To everyone who provided sandwiches and cookies for Outreach of Love each week and to those who pack and deliver the lunches each week.

### **Katelyn's Birthday Project**

We will be supporting Katelyn's Birthday Project in January. Katelyn, the daughter of SHUMC members, Kari and Frank Moore, struggled daily with chronic respiratory and other health issues during her 22 ½ months of life. She touched many lives with her smile, laugh, and determination. Katelyn and her family spent many days and nights at Cook Children's Medical Center in Fort Worth and the Moore family continues to remember Katelyn by helping other families facing a similar situation. Each year on Katelyn's birthday, they donate backpacks filled with goodies to the families at the PICU at Cook Children's Hospital. We are asking our members to sponsor a care package for \$20.00. A donation of any amount can be put towards the purchase of a backpack or contents to fill them. The Moore family will be speaking during a service in January.

### **Save the Date-February 5th**

After an absence of several years, Chili Warms the Soul is returning. Dust off your favorite chili recipe and your crock pot, and plan to attend Chili Warms the Soul on February 5<sup>th</sup> from 5:30 7:00pm. If you don't have a favorite chili recipe, feel free to bring a salad or dessert. See you on the 5<sup>th</sup>.



Once again, the Abundant Health and Mission Teams will be sponsoring a 12-week imaginary walk to Jerusalem to encourage physical activity, spiritual growth, and cultural awareness. We will take a different route this year and will post a little bit about the area we are walking through each week. Beginning mid-January, you can report your steps/ miles to help Smoky Hill reach Jerusalem by Easter. Watch for further details in the weekly eblasts.

The theme of our walk this year is kindness and there is a devotional with scripture, kindness challenges, songs, and a link to a children's book. This will be available online and there will be printed copies in the Gathering Space.

We are also making a kindness display and need your help. There are 42 coloring pages which will be available in the Gathering Space. Please take one, color it (using crayons or colored pencils only) and return it to the folder in the Gathering Space. We will take all the pages and put them together to make a display. If you have any questions, please contact Sharon Davis at [stdavis21@comcast.net](mailto:stdavis21@comcast.net)



## January 2023 Music Newsletter

Welcoming the new year creates many emotions: some exciting with joyful anticipation of what is to come, some with cautious optimistic hope, some with gladness that the past year is now past, some with sadness...that diagnosis no one expects right at Christmastime or the sudden unexpected illness and perhaps even death of a loved one, perhaps the anticipation and anxiety of that anniversary of the loss of a loved one every year as the new year begins. It's just a couple days after the new year has started and as I write our music newsletter for January, 2023, all of those emotions have already been a part of my life – it's a whirlwind of emotions and questions of what is to become, sometimes wondering what to do with sadness in the midst of newness and joy ~ emotions... a gift from God who remains steadfast as we jump for joy and crumble in a heap of tears. Thank you, God, for being with us each and every step of the way in this journey of life.

Musically in worship, December was the expected and anticipated time of busyness! The choir sang, the bells rang, the brass, strings and flutes played praising the Lord as the congregation sang carols preparing for the celebration of Christmas and the birth of baby Jesus.



December 9, we welcomed many community folks as well as many church families to “A Festive Night” concert of handbells and brass. What fun it was to see the children pretending to ring bells, to hear the laughter of infamous John Tedrick’s commentary on favorite Christmas songs as he told the history of each one...including how Grandma happened to get run over by the

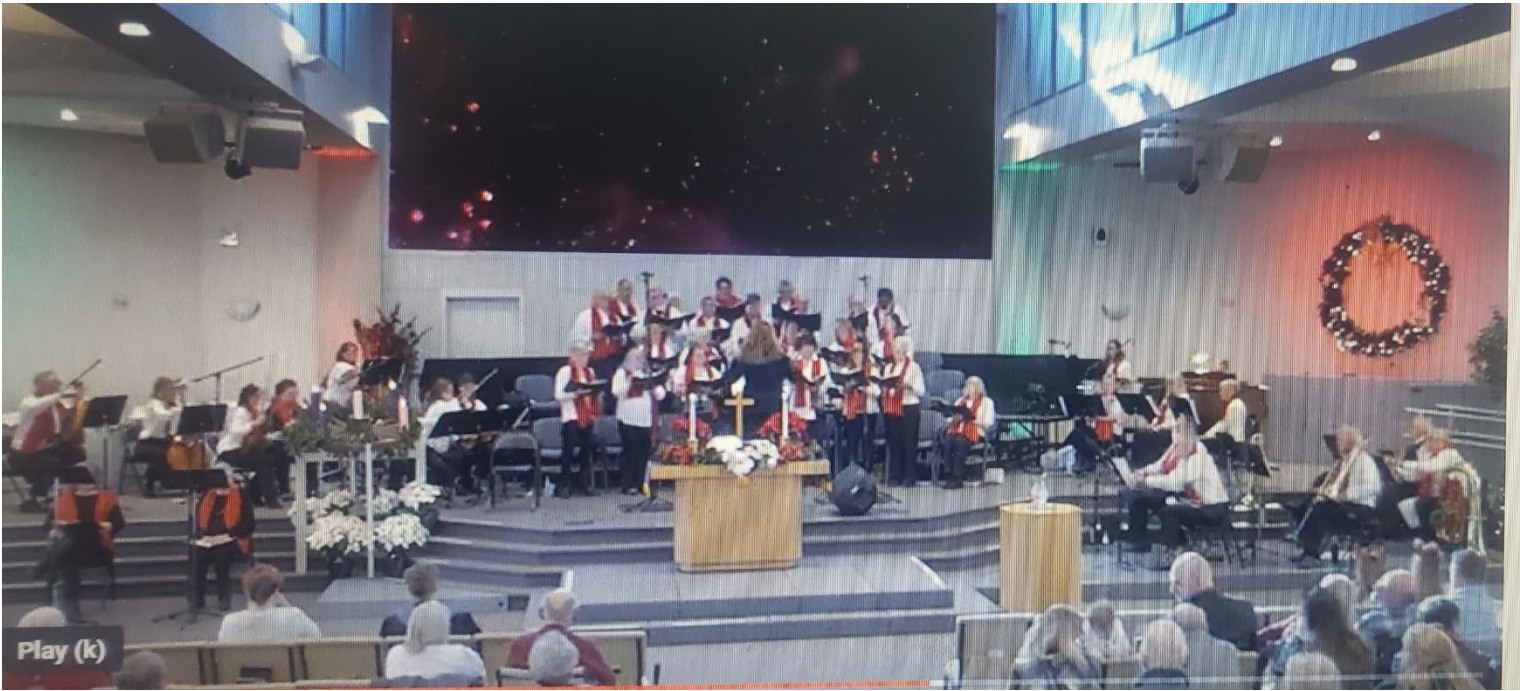
reindeer.... The sanctuary was decked out, the bells glistened as the ringers circled their arms playing favorite and the brass were phenomenal as they played carols – one of their favorites ending up as “Go, Tell It on the Mountain.” One person carried the melody line, our very own Gary Drumm on his decked-out tuba, while the other players broke out in song. We had a great turnout from a newborn baby to who knows how old. What a fun, fun evening!

If you missed it and still in the mood for some Christmas, look at our concert on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mc0qiQjBpp0>



On Dec. 10, many of our musicians took a hike down to Celebration Hall to pay visit to Santa! We gathered ‘round and sang “We Wish You a Merry Christmas” to our most favorite Santa who came to visit the children....Since we are ALL children of God it was only fitting that we join in Santa’s morning of visiting children!



Our Christmas cantata was performed on Dec. 18 and each service on Christmas Eve was spent singing carols and special music from our musicians. Again, if you missed worshipping in person or online in December, search Smoky Hill United Methodist Church on YouTube and you will find our past worship services.

My personal **THANK YOU** to all who helped provide music in December! It's an honor to be part of such a wonderful music program.

Behind the scenes of all that music is our **FANTASTIC AUDIO/VISUAL TEAM!** Thank you for helping our musicians sound great, for setting up and taking down equipment, for working the sound board, for making quick changes when they need to be made. Christmas Eve especially A/V Team – Each service was different with different sound needs, which takes time, the ability to change out equipment, etc. **YOU ARE APPRECIATED! THANK YOU!**

**JOIN US!** If you have been considering joining one of our musical groups, please do! As we begin the new year, it's a great time and opportunity to get started – Choir, handbells, if you play an instrument, would like to play the piano or do a musical special of some sort. We LOVE music here at SHUMC – what a great way to praise God through the gift and ministry of music.

**Blessings to you all as we begin a new year together.** We are here for each other – through the great and wonderful times and for those times that aren't so great.

Peace and blessings,  
Becky Stevens  
Director of Music Ministries

# MY STORY OF GRATITUDE



My gratitude for Smoky Hill runs deep. We joined Smoky Hill UMC over 25 years ago after the birth of our first child. I came from no religious/spiritual background and my wife, Hali was brought up mostly around the LDS church. We wanted to give our children a foundation for life and we found Smoky Hill at a time when Mack Lovvorn and Marti Zimmerman were the pastors. I am forever grateful to them both as they showed me what being a Christian looks like and didn't show me the door when I wanted to be argumentative or share my wild ideas while taking Discipleship classes many years ago. I would just get a compassionate look and was told to just keep coming and things will become clearer. Truer words were never spoken!

Granted it took me over 20 years to finally "join" the church. During that 20-year time period I was too invested in trying to be a success in life or I was having spinal surgeries that left me addicted to pain medication for the better part of 20 years. Five years ago when God touched my life and I was able to leave the addiction behind me, it was the small groups, like Tuesday Morning Theologians and the Sunday morning Way of Faith class that I felt the love and support of the people I love and respect. This was a turning point in my "walk with Christ". It was also a turning point in the fact that I finally found a place where I belong especially once Smoky Hill became a Reconciling Ministry. "Judge not lest you be judged" has become my personal mantra.

I honestly can't picture my life today without Smoky Hill. I don't mean the building or the Methodist Church. I am talking about the people. The people who kept the light burning even though some of us had a lot of hard roads to navigate before truly becoming a member of the church.

All I can say is...Thank You, Thank You, Thank You!! Whether you know it or not you all played a role in making me the person I am today and hopefully the person I will become tomorrow.

Peace and Love, John Richard

*It's time for a New PICTORIAL DIRECTORY!*



Photography will take place at  
Smoky Hill United Methodist  
Starting February 6, 2023.

No cost to be photographed.  
Receive a Complimentary 5x7

You must be photographed to get  
a copy of the directory.

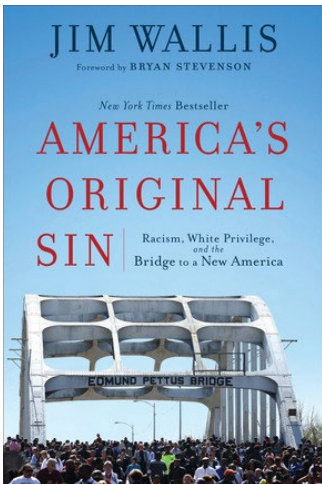
Portrait options also available  
at Bettinger Photography's  
Englewood Studio NOW!



**Schedule by phone at 303-400-6023 Or online [www.PictorialServices.net](http://www.PictorialServices.net)**

It's time for the new church directory! Photography sessions start soon and will take place Feb. 6-11 at SHUMC in Classroom 218. You may also be photographed now for the directory at Bettinger Photography in Lakewood to receive the same benefits. Portraits are available for purchase at discounted pricing. Only those that are photographed receive a copy of the printed pictorial directory and a free 5x7 photo. You can schedule your appointment by phone at 303-400-6023 or online at [www.PictorialServices.net](http://www.PictorialServices.net). Don't wait! Schedule today!

## SOCIAL JUSTICE



Jim Wallis who teaches at Georgetown University and has taught at Harvard has authored many books. Some, such as Christ in Crisis: Why We Need to Reclaim Jesus, The Great Awakening, and Seven Ways to Change the World have been studied by many churches.

I am currently reading his book AMERICA'S ORIGINAL SIN. He discusses the willful attempted elimination of Native Americans by white settlers, with help from Colorado's Governor Evans to create a situation leading to the Sand Creek Massacre of 150 Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians in Southeastern Colorado on 29 November 1864.

The main theme of the book is the need of black and brown parents to have THE TALK with their children about how to react to police officers. He discusses the murder of nine black church worshipers in Charleston, S,C, by a young white man. This reminded me of the song in the play South Pacific that says "you have to be carefully taught to hate." There is also a song by my favorite group Sweet Honey in the Rock, that says "We who believe in freedom cannot rest until the killing of black men, black mother's sons is as important as the killing of white men, white mother's sons."

I recommend the reading or study of this book - America's Original Sin, in order to recognize the impact of past and present systemic racism in America today. The book had a real impact in my understanding of past and present systemic racism on many minorities in America.

~Adam Kemper, Co-Chair

## Reconciling Ministries Team

The Reconciling Ministries team thanks our SHUMC family for their compassionate response to the Club Q shooting. We delivered 2 overflowing tubs of hats, scarves and gloves, as well as a \$50 donation to the Transgender Center of the Rockies. {And they are absolutely thrilled with all the homemade items, and how soft the yarn is!} We wore our rainbow colors on the first Sunday of Advent, and more importantly we lived up to the words in our welcome statement and LGBTQIA members of our community were able to come and worship with us, safely and peacefully, even in such an unsettling time. So from all of us on the RM team, happy new year, keep spreading God's love wherever you see a need.



“...in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”  
1 Thessalonians 5:18 (NKJV)

Join our [Smoky Hill Abundant Health Facebook page](#) to share recipes, hikes, etc. Maybe you want to find others in our church interested in going golfing, bowling, or just walking. This is the place to connect.

## MIND

Need some ideas to perk up your mood? Here are 31 Tips to Boost Your Mental Health [31 Tips to Boost Your Mental Health | Mental Health America \(mhanational.org\)](#)



# BODY

## Focus: Thankfulness

Sometimes life can become so busy that we forget to take time to thank God for giving us good health. Take time to enjoy your health and be thankful! Start a new thankfulness tradition! Consider trying a “thankfulness walk and talk” with family, friends, coworkers, or church members. As you walk, share with each other the things you are thankful for. Remember that walking is a great way to reach your exercise goal of 150 minutes a week of moderate physical activity. Many of us wonder what God’s will is for our lives. According to this Scripture, God’s will is for us to be thankful.

### Health Resources: (Pdf links)

- 10 kid-friendly veggies and fruits
- Simple Snacks are a Snap!
- Diabetes Advisor (Good information even for those who do not have Diabetes!)



### Recipe of the month – Overnight Banana Oatmeal

Here's a recipe for Overnight Banana Oatmeal for a quick hearty morning breakfast

<https://recipes.heart.org/en/recipes/overnight-no-cook-banana-oatmeal>

### Join Our New Yoga Class!

This class is open to all interested persons – Men and Women; young and not so young; in shape or not so in shape. Our instructor, Zachary Horan, has agreed to offer this class on a donation basis (suggested \$5-\$10 or so per session). Wear loose clothing and bring a mat, if possible. We will have a few mats available for use.

**Next class will be Tuesday, Jan 17 at 1:30pm in Celebration Hall.**





## Walk to Jerusalem 2023

Put on your walking shoes and get ready to “walk” together to Jerusalem this Lenten season. This is a family-friendly activity and together we will combine our miles walked as we contemplate the theme of “Kindness” through the study book and Kindness challenges put together by Sharon Davis. Pick up your copy in the Gathering Space or view or print online.

## Exercise on Zoom!

Looking for exercise that requires no money, no travel, and fast access to your shower? Join the Zoom exercise community on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings at 9:30, as well as Wednesday evenings at 6:30. For more information, contact Susan Hora at [cusaglass@gmail.com](mailto:cusaglass@gmail.com).

## Abundant Health Hiking Group

With the weather changing, our hiking group may not be as active. Keep an eye out for future hikes by watching the weekly e-blast or our [Smoky Hill Abundant Health Facebook page!](#)

# SPIRIT

Step Away to a holy place. Unplug from our noisy world and find a place of refuge, a sanctuary, where brokenness is welcome and God’s healing is real.

By Laura Buchanan <https://www.umc.org/en/content/step-away-to-a-holy-place>