

# ELEMENTS

JUNE 2025 NEWSLETTER



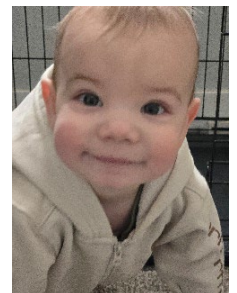
## Patti's Ponderings

*"The whole earth is a living icon of the face of God." -St. John of Damascus (675-749)*

Icons are a long-standing tradition in the Christian church. In the eyes of the Eastern Orthodox church, icons are windows to heaven which help us connect with God. Traditionally icons are elaborate paintings full of symbolism, usually a representation of Christ or other religious figures. St. John defended the use of icons in worship. (The opposition claimed icons were idols and forbidden in the 10 commandments.) He valued the use of icons to aid us in conceptualizing God. He extended the idea of icons beyond paintings. In his writings, as quoted above, he asserted "the whole earth is a living icon of the face of God." The psalmist who wrote Psalm 19 would agree; "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands." Psalm 19:1. How do you see God in creation?

In *Les Misérables*, the main character sings out, "To love another person is to see the face of God." Sometimes we see God in acts of compassion and kindness, in our love for others. A few weeks ago, my daughter was babysitting my grandson, Samuel. She took Samuel to work with her in a senior living care center. One woman, in the throes of dementia said aloud, "I've never seen God so small before." How do you see God in the faces and loving actions of people?

Wherever life takes us, when we keep our eyes open, we can see the face of God all around us. Let's keep our eyes open this summer to the variety of ways God is revealed to us.



Beginning June 16, I will be on renewal leave. I will be relaxing by a pool reading, spending time with family, and digging deep into Celtic Spirituality. I will conclude my time on a pilgrimage to Inishmore, an ancient site of Celtic Christianity in Ireland. I will return August 1. I thank you in advance for the gift of this time to renew my spirit and set me up for the next 5ish years of ministry. Rev. Glen and Pastora Lucia will competently lead you. We have wonderful preachers/speakers who will inspire you in worship each week as well as amazing lay leaders who will continue guiding this congregation on our journey of faith, making the world a better place. I will catch up with you in August and we can share our journeys with one another. I hope to hear the various ways you have seen and experienced God this summer. ~ **Pastor Patti**



## From the Associate Pastor's Desk

### Why June Pride Matters

In 1933, when the Nazi political party came into power in Germany, the city of Berlin was the center of gay culture.

After the election and take over by the newly elected party, clubs, organizations and publications related to gay culture were shut down. Books, art and anything dealing with gay culture was burned, banned and denounced as immoral.

Revision of Paragraph 175 of German law made it easier to bring criminal charges for homosexual acts leading to large increases in arrests and convictions. The goal was simple, to eliminate all manifestation of homosexuality in Germany.

Between 1933 and 1945 an estimated 100,000 men were arrested as homosexuals. The number of gay men who died in concentration camps is not fully known, but the marking of men with pink triangles became well known during this time. (Article from Wikipedia Revised May 18, 2025.)

In the United States, executive order 10450 by President Ike Eisenhower in 1953, along with pressure from Senator Joseph McCarthy, led to the mass firings of an estimated 10,000 government workers who identified as gay or lesbian. (Article from the National Park Service)

The United Methodist Church has also had an internal struggle over the issue of homosexuality which has led many individuals and churches to leave our denomination.

In Colorado, the passage of Amendment 2 in 1992, prohibited the state from enacting anti-discrimination protections for gay, lesbian and bisexual individuals. While this amendment was later struck down by the United States Supreme Court in 1996, the passage of Amendment 2 sent a wave of debate across the country.

Now, fast forward to 2024, where Colorado voters passed Amendment J, which removed the ban on same-sex marriage from the state constitution. (Ref Google)

So... the battle is over... Right? or Wrong?

Just recently, a group of conservative MAGA pastors in Colorado have been preaching sermon series on how the new state law prohibits them from speaking out against the transgender community as well as how inclusion of the LGBTQI+ community will be the undoing of the moral fabric the state of Colorado. (See 9 News, May 22, 2025)

Much of what is being preached by these pastors is based out of fear and fanning the flames of homophobia focusing on the transgender community.

The truth of the matter is that Amendment J does not force churches or any pastors to marry gay couples or include people who are LGBTQI+ or transgender... It also doesn't ban preachers from talking about transgender issues in a derogatory way.

But I wish it did...

As a reconciling congregation, Smoky Hill UMC took the huge step to say, hate, bigotry and prejudice are not welcome here.

One of the reasons that I am the associate pastor at Smoky Hill UMC is because this church has made a commitment to overcoming all forms of racial and social injustice... but I'm not here just to do ministry to the LGBTQI+ community. I'm here for all. Always remember that the + in LGBTQI+ is for you... as an advocate or someone who is straight that has friends and family in the community.

On Sunday, June 1st, I'd like to share with you a personal story about my family, and I hope it will change the way everyone thinks and feels about all families as well as the transgender and LGBTQI+ community.

The celebration of families and Pride will continue all month as we show pictures and celebrate the lives of all families that are part of Smoky Hill UMC.

I hope you will join us.

Blessings,  
Rev. Glen Wood



## ADULT CLASSES & GROUPS

### Adult Open Door - Sundays at 9:00 am in Room 218

This class is a welcoming, inclusive environment, inviting individuals from diverse backgrounds to participate, whether you're new to Bible study or have been participating for years. Come as you are! No need to prepare or do homework - just bring yourself and an open heart. We use various forms of media to stimulate thoughts and ideas and focus on meaningful conversation and spiritual growth rather than formal lessons. No need to RSVP - just drop in whenever you can. For more information contact Kim Brice [kbrice227@gmail.com](mailto:kbrice227@gmail.com)

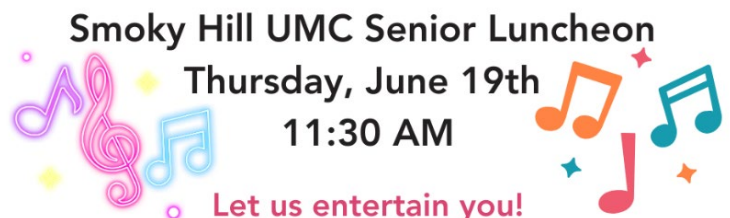
### The Way of Faith - Sundays at 9:00 am in the Upper Room & on Zoom

This is an inclusive and open group whose focus is on God's love in our world today and how we can do better to live God's will in our lives. We start each class with a video that includes such authors and theologians as Richard Rohr, Diana Butler Bass, AJ Levine, Adam Hamilton and many, many more. Each Sunday is a standalone teaching and conversation allowing people to attend when possible. We hope you will join us as we gather to discern the way of Christ in our lives today and seek to be deeper rooted in the love of God.

Tom Yook will be our guest entertainment for the Smoky Hill Senior Lunch on June 19<sup>th</sup> from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Tom will also be joined by his wife, Shirley.

Tom will be taking requests as he plays your favorite songs! He has been performing for Optimist Clubs and many civic groups for over 60 years!

A suggested donation of \$10.00 will help cover the cost of the lunch as well as Tom's entertainment. Please give as you are able and know that everyone is welcome! Please RSVP to 303-690-9816 or [churchsecretary@smokyhillumc.org](mailto:churchsecretary@smokyhillumc.org). The church office will be closed for the Juneteenth holiday.



Tom Yook will be our guest musical entertainment.  
Tom will be taking requests and playing your favorite songs!

*A suggested donation of \$10.00 will help cover the cost of the lunch and Tom's entertainment.  
Please give as you are able and know that everyone is welcome!*

Please register for this lunch 303-690-9816  
[churchsecretary@smokyhillumc.org](mailto:churchsecretary@smokyhillumc.org)





# CHILDREN & FAMILY

Children and Family Ministries, June 2025



**Nursery care** for all kids up to the age of 5 is available from 9:45 - 11:00 am every Sunday morning.

**Adult Sunday School Classes from 9:00 to 9:45 am**

Will meet every Sunday: The Way of the Faith and Open Door

(if you are attending an adult class, Crystal will have stuff for the kids to do)

## June Events

**June 1<sup>st</sup>** - Worship & CC at 10:00 am.

**June 8<sup>th</sup>** - Worship & CC at 10:00 am.

**June 15<sup>th</sup>** - Worship & CC at 10:00 am.

**June 22<sup>nd</sup>** - Worship as a Family, No CC at 10:00 am.

**June 23<sup>rd</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup>** - VBC 5:30 to 7:30 pm.

**June 29<sup>th</sup>** - Worship & VBC Celebration at 10:00 am. Don't want to miss- Kids will be leading Worship. Grill team after.

**Children start in Sanctuary, after Children's Message, kids come to Summer Children's Church (CC) or stay in Worship**

**Time to register and Crystal is looking for many Volunteers!!!**

June 23rd to 27th 5:30 to 7:30 pm. June 29th will be VBC Celebration Worship at 10am. Kids will be leading Worship, you do not want to miss this Sunday.



**SMOKY HILL UMC  
VACATION BIBLE  
CAMP**

**FREE**  
**COMPASSION  
CAMP**  
CHANGING THE WORLD WITH LOVINGKINDNESS

**JUNE 23RD-27TH  
5:30-7:30 PM**

storytelling, games,  
science, snacks and more

**We are looking for many Volunteers.**  
If you can help, please reach out to  
Crystal: [Crystald@smokyhillumc.org](mailto:Crystald@smokyhillumc.org)

**Open to all kids ages 3 yrs  
and up**

**REGISTRATION**



Compassion Camp Changing the World with Lovingkindness

Vacation Bible Camp June 23<sup>rd</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> from 5:30 -7:30 pm.  
FREE for kids 3 yrs and up.

Middle and High schoolers can volunteer.  
Want to Volunteer: reach out to Crystal or email at  
[crystald@smokyhillumc.org](mailto:crystald@smokyhillumc.org)

You can register here: <https://forms.gle/MYHkGKdifaFMyEzX8>

**June 29<sup>th</sup> – VBC Celebration Sunday** Do not worry, we will have a water ball toss during VBC - Friday, June 27th (could change due to weather) and after Worship Sunday, June 29th. Our Grill Team will also be out front on the 29th.

**FREE & SNACKS PROVIDED!!** Thank you to our Men's group for covering the expenses.

**On Mother's Day our children decorated flowerpots for their moms.**





## May 18th was a busy day for the Children at Smoky Hill!!

Congratulations to all our kids that have moved up a grade in school. Teacher Appreciation and Ice Cream party!

Remember you all are a blessing to me & Smoky Hill. Have a great summer.

### Children's Choir started us off with Jesus Loves Me with Sign Language



### Teacher Appreciation

Thank You to Kimberly, Susan, Len, Rachel, Samantha, Becky, Joel, Leah, Christy, Jim, Gillian, and Jan (not pictured)





## Award Sunday and Ice Cream Party – 😊



## Held our first Jello Jamboree after Church. Lots of different Jellos. It was delicious!!



Watch the eblast and family email for upcoming Church summer family fun events. If you are not getting the family email, let Crystal know.





I've admittedly been "off the Newsletter Train" for a bit. (Not on purpose.) But, I'm so very proud of all of the things we've done this year.

**Here's what our Youth have been up to since January:**

- Lots of singing as Nate Southerland led us on our Fellowship & Faith (normal youth group) nights
- Youth Sunday School
- Youth Sunday – the planning and the performing
- Annual Pancake Supper fundraiser
- Our annual Winter Retreat in Larkspur @ Ponderosa Retreat Center
- Our annual Oscars Party (where we "dress up fancy" and walk the red carpet)
- Baked Irish soda bread to give to friends and neighbors
- A trip to the movies to see "King of Kings", a new animated movie of Jesus' story (we highly recommend!)
- Annual Easter Brunch fundraiser
- Youth Crafty Community meetups, where we catch up and work on individual creative projects mid-week, then sell at the Craft Fair
- Playing LOTS of games together
- Reflecting at prayer stations
- Prepping gardens and mulching a path at The Land UMC
- Craft Fair setup & takedown
- Packing lunches for Outreach of Love on the 5th Sundays
- Celebrating our graduating seniors
- Inviting in some new youth



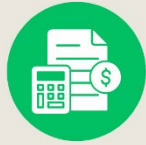
**Here's a look into the amazing 2024-2025 youth year we've had, in pictures. It shows the joy this group can bring to one another. [Click here to watch our youth year recap video!](#)**

A special shoutout to our amazing **Youth Sponsors** – Nate Southerland, Tom Dosch, John Richard, Ashley Duncan, Natalie Fetter, Debbie Kemper and Laura Dosch. I'm TRULY grateful for all you give to this group in all of your individual ways. We are a stronger group with each of you in the mix! Thank you for understanding the importance of our Youth program to this church.

Another special shoutout to our **2025 seniors**, who added their names to the youth room wall on Celebration Sunday! Thank you for all of the hours you spent "being there" over the past 7 years. Youth group years are life-changing years. I'm so very proud of each of you and can't wait to see the big things you do. You will be so missed next year, but you'll always be part of our youth family!

– Jen Dahlen, Youth Director





## FINANCE

### **Deficit cut in half!**

Last month I reported that due to an increase in our insurance policy, after making adjustments to the 2025 budget, our projected deficit increased to \$48,958. Thanks to the generosity of several people who have given extra gifts to offset our deficit totaling \$28,600, our projected shortfall now stands at \$20,358!! That is amazing. Smoky Hill is a generous congregation who believes in our mission of making the world a more loving and just place. Thank you! ~Pastor Patti



## JUSTICE MINISTRIES

### **POSITIVE CHANGE**

#### **COLORADO VILLAGE COLLABORATIVE**

CVC has secured a grant to improve their Safe Open Space. Palette homes, supporting 2 residents, will replace tents and expanded electricity is also planned. The rules are still the same, as they apply to expectations for the residents. A social worker needs to approve applicants and strict site rules are in place. The location where we take donations is in the parking lot of Denver Human Services. Residents can have access to services such as legal information and social workers. They are grateful for our donations. Needs change and currently they need mostly men's clothing in medium and large clothing, but not extra large. They also need kitchen items, gently used, to be given to those residents who have obtained jobs and have a furnished apartment. Bedding and towels were recently donated and can be used on site and in the new apartments. Supports continue for a brief time as they transition out. Recently there have been several who have transitioned. If you are doing spring cleaning, please remember CVC and the bin downstairs across from the elevator. Thank you to all of you who have contributed to the "hand up" purpose of Colorado Village Collaborative.

#### **CONVERSATIONAL ENGLISH CLASSES**

Libraries are offering Conversational English Classes. They're open to all and a good place to develop relationships for newcomers. Aurora offers classes at MLK Library and Central Library. Arapahoe Libraries offer Conversational Circles to learn English at both Eloise May Library and Smoky Hill Library.

#### **COLORADO GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

The 74<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, 2024 session has ended with many bills on the governor's desk awaiting his signature to become law. Three bills that have garnered public attention after devastating occurrences in the funeral home industry in Colorado. These have been signed into law recently by Governor Polis. Colorado previously has been the only state that didn't require certification for funeral home directors.

Other bills are awaiting the governor's signature are bills strengthening enforcement of human trafficking, several bills giving expanded rights to foster children, environmental protections and many more. You can always access the General Assembly at [leg.colorado.gov](https://leg.colorado.gov).

**~Sue Ricker**

## RACIAL JUSTICE TASK FORCE

### **Finding My True Self: A Late Bloomer's Journey of Faith and Identity**

Erin Baschal

Secretary, Rainbow Alliance; Member, Racial Justice Task Force

At this point in my life, I identify as queer.

In the LGBTQIA+ community, people like me are sometimes called “late bloomers” — those who come to understand their queerness later in life. For me, that realization came about a year and a half ago, when I was 40.

You might be wondering: *How does that happen? How can someone not realize something so important for 40 years?*

Many people grow up in environments where queerness isn't visible, named, or even imagined. So, like many others, I dated men and figured that was just how life worked.

I grew up in Colorado Springs, surrounded by a fairly conservative environment shaped by purity culture. I didn't have queer friends, family members, or even role models nearby — so it never occurred to me that queerness was even an option. This is what we call heteronormativity — the assumption that everyone is straight.

In 2020, things began to shift. I found myself on TikTok, following creators whose lives and perspectives were really different from what I knew. I also started listening to podcasts about faith, justice, and allyship — and through all of that, I began to connect with queer voices as well.

At the same time, I was doing a lot of personal work — digging deep into my own beliefs and becoming more honest and open about who I am, both as a Christian and as a woman. I was lucky to meet some wonderful people at just the right time, and they helped me grow into the person I am today.

Slowly but surely, I came to realize something important and true: I am attracted to women. And when that clicked, it felt more real and right than anything I'd ever known.

Not long after that, I found my way to Smoky Hill UMC. Like many of you, I was drawn by this church's deep commitment to social justice. I joined the Rainbow Alliance and the Racial Justice Task Force, and over the past year, my faith and my sense of self have continued to grow and flourish in this community. I feel the SHUMC community supports me in my journey. If you are also on a journey to self-discovery, know that you are not alone. The journey doesn't have to be quick, and it doesn't have to be loud. It just has to be yours.

I'm so grateful to be on this journey, and to share it with all of you.



## RAINBOW ALLIANCE

### Pride Month

You might have noticed a new acronym this year — **2SLGBTQIA+**.

So, what does it mean — and why has it changed?

Honestly, I had to look it up myself, too!

**2SLGBTQIA+** stands for **Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexual**, and the “+” acknowledges the many other identities and ways people choose to self-identify.

You may also notice that 2S (Two-Spirit) comes first. This honors Indigenous peoples and reminds us that we live on Indigenous land.

If you're curious, this [Queer 101](#) resource defines each term in more detail.

*~Erin Baschal*



**June 1<sup>st</sup> is Pride Sunday** at SHUMC - Rainbow colored attire is encouraged and appreciated.



### Marti's Pantry

Marti's Pantry is located on the education level, across from the elevators and is available to church and community members who are in need. This month, we are collecting small packages of toilet paper and paper towels, shampoo and conditioner, small bottles of laundry detergent, small bottles of cooking oil, and snack items.

### UMCOR Mission Trip

The Mission Team is considering planning a Mission Trip in 2026 to volunteer at UMCOR Sager Brown in Baldwin, Louisiana. We would be putting together hygiene kits which are used when a disaster strikes. If you have an interest, please let Sharon Davis ([stdavis21@comcast.net](mailto:stdavis21@comcast.net)) or Wendy Hanson ([ghanw2@aol.com](mailto:ghanw2@aol.com)) know. This is not a firm commitment; we are just trying to get an idea of interest and then we will pick a date that works for those volunteering. You can read more about Sager Brown at <https://umcmmission.org/umcor-supply-depots/>. We would like to have an initial list by the end of June as volunteer slots are filling up quickly.

## **Smoky Hill Abundant Health - June 2025**

The Abundant Health emphasis for the month of June will be the health and fitness of children, especially with kids out of school for the summer and with our amazing Vacation Bible Camp approaching at the end of the month.

Are you looking for ways to help limit your child's screen time, finding fun ways to get your family up and moving, and healthy recipes. Check out the link for "We Can!," found on the Mountain Sky Conference Abundant Health site, [We Can!](#) that had great tips and resources for these questions and more to help enhance children's activity and nutrition.

### **On the Move with Smoky Hill UMC**

Group 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. Contact Susan Hora at [cusaqlass@gmail.com](mailto:cusaqlass@gmail.com)

Hiking Group: Spring has sprung! Keep an eye out for upcoming hikes by watching the weekly e-blast or our [Smoky Hill Abundant Health Facebook page](#) or contact Marta at 720-271-0691 with questions.

Yoga at Smoky Hill: This class will not be meeting now through the summer. Zachary may try to work out a monthly date if he is available. Stay tuned.

**Join us on Facebook! [Smoky Hill Abundant Health](#) This is the place to connect about hikes, bowling, kayaking, fishing, and new recipes!**

### **JUNE HIKES**

Everyone (including family, friends and neighbors) are welcome on these trails! Please contact Marta ([martanielsen@yahoo.com](mailto:martanielsen@yahoo.com)) or Wendy ([ghanw2@aol.com](mailto:ghanw2@aol.com)) for more information or to let us know you are coming.



**Friday June 13 - Devil's Head Fire Tower  
(meet at church at 6:30am)**



**Saturday June 28 - Chief Mountain (meet at church at 7:00am)**



**Walk Where We Live**

**No mountains, no maps, no programs.**

**Simply 3-mile (approximately) walks on Saturday mornings in our neighborhoods, parks, and on trails.**

**We'll start at 8:30, finish by 10:30, be home for the rest of precious Saturday time. Please arrive about 8:20 so we can share names & smiles and start walking at 8:30.**

**Walkers, leashed dogs, children, strollers welcome.**

**2 Saturdays in June**

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**June 14 - Piney Creek Trail ([www.pineycreek.org](http://www.pineycreek.org))  
5797 S Laredo Ct, Aurora, CO**

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**June 28 - Spring Creek Park  
4001 S Himalaya Circle, Aurora, CO**

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**BRING YOUR WATER**

**Questions: Linda Scherbenske (410-218-0957) Tracy Sobczak (720-273-6430)**



## Spiritual Day Together at SHUMC June 7th

Mile High Metro United Women in Faith  
Spiritual Day ~ ALL Women Welcome!  
Saturday, June 7 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.  
Smoky Hill UMC  
19491 E Smoky Hill Road, Centennial

**Cost is \$12, which includes lunch. Please register by visiting this link:**

**<https://secure.myvanco.com/L-ZECN/home>**

Questions? Need childcare?  
Special dietary needs? Please email  
[MileHighMetroUWFaith@gmail.com](mailto:MileHighMetroUWFaith@gmail.com)

**Make  
A  
Joyful  
Noise!**

**Bring a non-  
perishable food  
or feminine  
hygiene donation  
for Aurora  
Interfaith Food  
Pantry**

Dixie Lingler and Karen Mazza will lead us as we remember the joy of making music, like we did as children, instead of performing music.

Muhummad Zeeshan, LPCC will lead a workshop on "what to do when the noise is too loud" teaching healthy coping strategies.

Join Kim Myers for Triple G: Grace, Gratitude and God. Explore ways to take a short break from everyday chaos and reunite with God!

Enjoy Calming Collage and therapeutic relaxation with Alyce Duckworth.

**Mile High Metro District UW in Faith**  
Register at [Mile High Metro Spiritual Day | Smoky Hill United Methodist Church](#)



## Practicing Hope Together July 21st Mission u program at SHUMC



### Registration is OPEN

Mountain Sky Conference's Mission Team and United Women in Faith invites you to a day-long IN-PERSON Mission u at Smoky Hill UMC. The theme is Practicing Hope and the study will be **available in both English and Spanish.**

Practicing Hope Together is a timely study reflective of the spiritual and political moment we are experiencing. It is a time when many of our churches are discerning where Christ is calling us to be morally courageous when our world leaders fail us and our communities work to "come back" together after being on the brink of collapse.

This curriculum will explore how we can hope differently. We will study scripture, look at some timely podcasts and practice how we can take care of ourselves.

Join us from **8:30 - 5 PM on June 21st - Cost \$15** - includes light breakfast, lunch and a snack.

Registration deadline is June 14

Register at <https://mtnsky-reg.brapp.com/MissionuPracticingHopeTogether>  
print your own below or pick up a paper form at church.

**[Print Registration Form English](#)**

**[Print Registration Form Spanish](#)**

**JOIN US and Bring your Friends! This study is for everyone in the congregation.**



# WORSHIP

## **Worship with Us!** **Sundays 10:00 AM**

*Livestream on FB & YouTube*

**Adult Sunday School 9 AM**



Can't BE HERE? Join the 10:00 AM English  
service on [Facebook](#) or [YouTube](#)

## **Enciende Una Luz**

**Servicio Hispano**  
**Domingo a Las 10:00 a.m.**  
**y Facebook Live**

Llame a Pastora Lucia Correa al  
303-690-9816

**For the Facebook link please contact Pastor Lucia**



19491 E Smoky Hill Rd  
Centennial, CO80015  
303-690-9816

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***Following Jesus together to make the world a more loving and just place.***

Email all information and updates for church communications to [churchsecretary@smokyhillumc.org](mailto:churchsecretary@smokyhillumc.org)