



ELEMENTS

JANUARY 2024 NEWSLETTER



Patti's Ponderings

There is a phenomenon that when you single out a thing, you see it more often. For example, when I am considering buying a car and I choose a make and model I am interested in, all of a sudden I see people driving that same car all over. Or, when someone names a color, you look around and see that color in places you didn't realize it was. Take a moment and look around your environment...do you see any yellow? If you keep your eyes attuned to yellow today, I think you will see it in unexpected places. January 6th is traditionally celebrated in the church as Epiphany. A day to commemorate the 3 magi, who traveled from the East, following a star, to see and honor the Christ child. Matthew 2:9-10 NIV records the story of the Magi in these words:

They (the magi) went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him.

A tradition has developed recently to receive "Star Words" which guide us through the year, as the star guided the magi. Each year you get a new star word. Last year, my word was *faithfulness*. Similarly to a specific car or the color yellow, *faithfulness* popped up in unexpected places all year. It surprised me more than once, usually when I was struggling, *faithfulness* popped into my head and offered me the guidance, or the challenge, or the encouragement I needed in the moment.

I encourage you to get a star word using the star word generator below. Now, the temptation is to keep generating words until you get one you like. But I would challenge you to receive the first word that posts as a gift. Then watch through the year how that word speaks into your life. I think you will be surprised.

Here is a star word generator. (It is dated for 2023, there was not an updated generator for 2024, so let's go with this 😊)
<https://perchance.org/salhousestarword2023> Click on this link and a word will pop up. Write it down in your journal, or on a sticky and post it on your fridge, or computer, or bathroom mirror. Then keep your eyes and heart open to that word. See how the Spirit uses it to guide you throughout the year. I would love to hear about your experiences!

A prayer for receiving your star word:

O Lord, Help me to be open to the gift that you offer me now through my star word. I acknowledge that I do not fully understand what this word might mean for me this year, but I receive it from you with gratitude and pray that your Spirit will enable me to live into this word with intention and faithfulness. Amen.

*May the Lord bless you and keep you,
Pastor Patti*



**SMOKY HILL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
CLOSED JANUARY 1, 2024**



WORSHIP

Worship With Us

Sundays 8:30 AM & 10:00 AM

Livestream at 10 AM on Facebook & YouTube

Sunday School ~ 9:00 & 10:00 AM



CAN'T BE HERE? Catch the 10:00 AM Service online:

[Livestream on Facebook](#)

[Livestream on YouTube](#)

or watch the service when it's convenient for you!

Enciende Una Luz

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

Llame a Pastora Lucia Correa al
303-690-9816

On Saturday, December 16, Pastor Lucia and members of her congregation drove three full trucks to where newly arrived immigrants are living in tents in downtown Denver. They gave out food, bibles, and the clothing that was collected. Everything was given away. They need so much, but as Pastor Lucia says, "We can only do what we can do." Pastor Lucia said many prayers for the people and was especially moved by all the children.





Coffee Time

Let's connect with coffee & treats between services



If your last name begins with A, B, or C, please bring a snack to share on Sundays in January ~ *Thank You!*

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
- Veggie 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



CHILDREN & FAMILY

Children and Family Ministry

Welcome to 2024!!!!

Breakfast with Santa was a big success, and all were excited for Santa Lee. Thank you to Mrs. Claus Mary.

We had about 130 or more come through our door. Special Thank Yous: 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; Youth for running crafts; and all that helped with set up and tear down. Kids enjoyed making reindeer food.

Breakfast with Santa 2023



**Thank you
Men's Group for
all your help!!**



**Thank you to
United Women in
Faith for your help!**



Thank you to the Youth Group kids for your help and Pancakes.



On December 17, our Children's Choir participated in the Cantata singing *The Friendly Beasts* and *Hope for Everyone* and all kids and adults ended with a parade with ribbons.

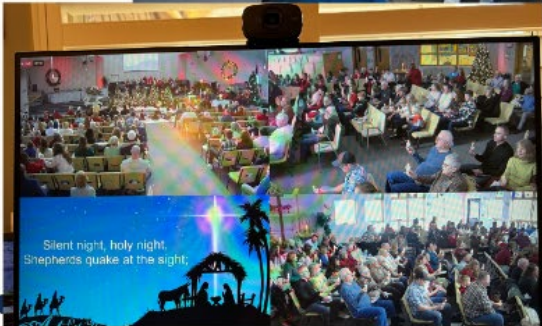


Our Children's Christmas Program was on Christmas Eve.

Throughout the morning our children retold the nativity story. We went on a journey to Bethlehem, it was so hot and a long walk, we could not find a donkey but then we found a donkey which helped us get to Bethlehem much faster. We lit our advent candles and shared Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace. The kids sang songs with the congregation and then our children's choir sang *Away in the Manger*. We ended our program with *Silent Night* and *Joy to the World*.

What a joy it was to have so many children participate with us on a cold and snowy Christmas Eve morning. Thank you to Len, Rachel, Samantha, and Laura for your help in leading the children. To the parents, Nursery Staff, and all who were helping our children, and to the AV team who was able to move with us as we walked around. To Becky and all the musicians that played that morning, we thank you very much and you all are a blessing to Smoky Hill and to me.

Christmas Eve Children Program



Christmas Eve Children Program



JOIN US ON SUNDAY MORNINGS

8:30-9:30 AM WORSHIP, NURSERY, CHILDREN'S MESSAGE AND CHILDREN'S CHURCH.

10:00 -11:00 AM WORSHIP, NURSERY, CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR AGES 3YR TO 5TH GRADE.

**NOTE, THE LAST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH WILL BE WORSHIP AS A FAMILY, NO CHILDREN'S CHURCH, OR SUNDAY SCHOOL.



Sunday school: we will resume classes on January 7th.

We are looking for one more volunteer to help in Sunday School one Sunday a month. You do not have to plan your curriculum!! Please reach out to Crystal or Len.

Let [Crystal](#) know if you need to be added to the email list. She sends out a monthly email about what is happening with the kids.

Undie Sunday will take place on February 11th.



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 large bucket by the Upper Room in the Gathering Space.

We donate to schools in Arapahoe, Denver, and Adams counties.

Thank You for your support!



YOUTH

Advent season in Youth Group was full of fun, faith, fellowship and great energy!

On Thanksgiving weekend Sun night we had a pie potluck, talked about the importance of gratitude for a meaningful life and decorated our own gratitude journals to keep. The youth were given a challenge to complete 21 straight days of prompts, with the reward being a \$15 gift card. THREE amazing 6th grade youth accomplished this goal – Will Dosch, Maelena O'Connor and Ember Horne! I'm SO PROUD of them for experiencing the value of the daily practice of gratitude – and for hearing what was being taught that night!

Peggy Taylor came to talk to us about prayer – and show us how to make / use prayer beads –the first Sun night of December. Mid December we had our second annual “Christmas Photo Scavenger Hunt” – which means we go out in teams / cars and have a list of fun group photos with points that we need to gather to win. Our favorites are “get a photo of buying hot choc for a stranger,” or “group photo of someone hugging a stranger.”

When youth were asked to hopefully show up on a Saturday morning at 8:15 to help with “Breakfast with Santa,” I honestly didn't have high hopes. (They are teenagers, and that was an early Saturday morning. Just being realistic.) But TWELVE kids showed up that morning at 8:15 to help with all the things! (Whether parents made them or they opted in, that's a great turnout!)

Our Youth Christmas Party was a “progressive activities” kind of thing. We traveled in groups/cars to 3 different homes for a different Christmas activity at each. Appetizers and gift exchange at The Legleiters', then cookie decorating at the Kempers', then gourmet hot cocoa and firepit at the Niensens' – all within 2 hours. It was fast, furious, and FUN!

Looking forward to new Youth Group adventures in the new year!

CHRISTMAS 2023 YOUTH FUN!



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 Poverty

January is Poverty Awareness Month. The Poor People's Campaign was Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s last major area of focus before his assassination. He believed addressing poverty was

the next necessary step in the civil rights movement. You can learn about that effort from his own perspective in the last chapter of his autobiography, available for free online here: [Chapter 31: The Poor People's Campaign | The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute \(stanford.edu\)](#) The Fair Housing Act was passed a week after King was murdered, and this has slowly made a difference in the racial disparity of home ownership. After King's untimely death, however, income disparity in our country has not diminished; it has skyrocketed. In 1976, 8 years after his death, the top 1% of earners possessed about 8% of the country's total income. At the end of 2021, the same top 1% took home 32% of the country's total income.

While King and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference would definitely emphasize the racial inequality that shows up in the distribution of wealth in our country, and that is important to recognize, poverty is also a huge problem for people of all races here. Throughout American history, at least as early as the American Revolution, wealthy landowners have encouraged racism in the poorer classes. If white tenants thought, "At least we're not black," then they would be far less inclined to collaborate with their similarly-situated Black neighbors to rise up against the ruling class. As a nation, we've made some great strides in rewriting that narrative and uniting the working class, and there is still a long way to go if we want to be free of that foundational story. We have seen unions striking throughout 2023, some with impressive gains to show for it. There is reason to hope for lasting changes in our economy as a nation.

In the meantime, though, there are people in our community living in poverty. There are unhoused people all around us. There are housing-insecure and food-insecure families all around us, too. And often, we do not know who around us is struggling to make ends meet. So, while we do what we can to try to change the systems that fail to support our neighbors, how can we be good neighbors to people living in poverty?

1. Challenge assumptions (your own and others'). For example, the issue of homelessness is overloaded with misconceptions that politicians and media sources have built into our societal narratives. Here are just a few things that surprise a lot of people: There are homeless people who work and still cannot afford housing. There are a small minority who actually choose a houseless lifestyle. There are people who are, in fact, homeless but have a place to sleep indoors, maybe on a friend's couch or in a family member's loft. People experiencing homelessness are just as complex and diverse as people in general. Even among the housed population, a worrying number of individuals and families are housing-insecure, meaning they live paycheck-to-paycheck and one unexpected bill could put them on the streets. A large portion of what appears to be the middle class today is actually working class with a lot of credit card debt. Realize that we are all far closer to being unhoused than we are to being billionaires, and do what you can in your conversations with other housed people to foster empathy.
2. Treat people, like people. It seems overly simple, but this is an important practice. Even if you have nothing to give the person at the intersection holding a cardboard sign, make eye contact. The dehumanizing nature of so many experiences of people in poverty takes a massive mental and emotional toll. Something as simple as meeting someone's eyes, acknowledging your shared humanity, can make a big difference.
3. Take action. Donate food to Aurora Interfaith Community Services. Bring the supplies needed for Colorado Village Collaborative. Talk to legislators and express that fighting poverty needs to be a high priority. Look into possible responses and support the ones you see as most viable and/or impactful. Even if your solution never happens, pushing for it shifts the conversation towards caring about people in poverty instead of measures like criminalizing homelessness. If you don't know where to start, our Missions Committee (chaired by Sharon Davis and Wendy Hanson) and the Positive Change Committee (chaired by Sue Ricker) are excellent resources!

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/E9eRqZJGLqVaqbDZ9> or email me directly at virginiaq@smokyhillumc.org.



MISSION

Thank You!

It was a busy year for the Mission Team, and we are always grateful for the generosity of this congregation.

In 2023 we:

- Raised \$510 for Colorado Village Collaborative through Chili Warms the Soul.
- Raised \$1,040 for Katelyn's Birthday Project.
- Raised over \$3,000 for UMCOR Sunday.
- Helped pack monthly meal boxes for Colorado Feeding Kids.
- Provided several meals at Grace UMC when they hosted families for family promise and donated \$1,080 to help with expenses.
- Raised \$1,495 for Heifer through the Alternative Giving Program.
- Collected over 40 pairs of shoes for Wholly Kicks.
- 3 Gift Totals will be reported soon.
- Distributed 170 (\$8,500) Safeway Gift Cards to people in need through their Nourishing Neighbors Program.
- Collected boots and socks for Christmas in the Park.
- Collected used eyeglasses which were donated to the Lions Club.
- Collected pop tabs which raised money for Ronald McDonald House.
- Provided 82 lunches every week through Outreach of Love to the day laborers in Aurora.
- Collected over 6,000 pounds of food for Aurora Interfaith.
- Started Marti's Pantry at the church for community members in need.

We are looking forward to seeing what we can do in 2024. The Mission Team is always looking for new members and new projects. If you would like to join our team, please contact Sharon Davis at stdavis21@comcast.net or Wendy Hanson at dhanw2@aol.com

Katelyn's Birthday Project

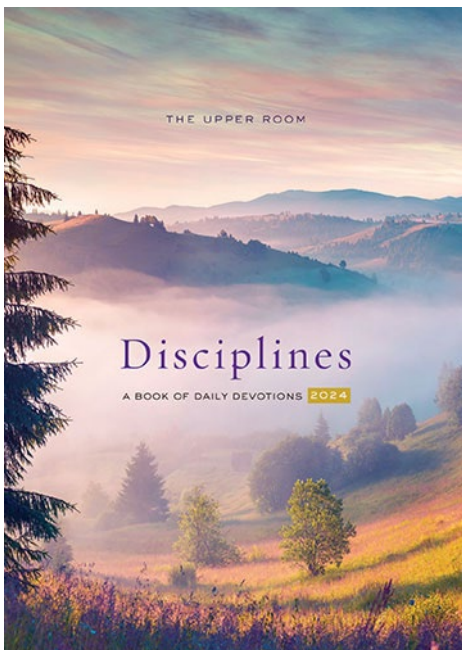
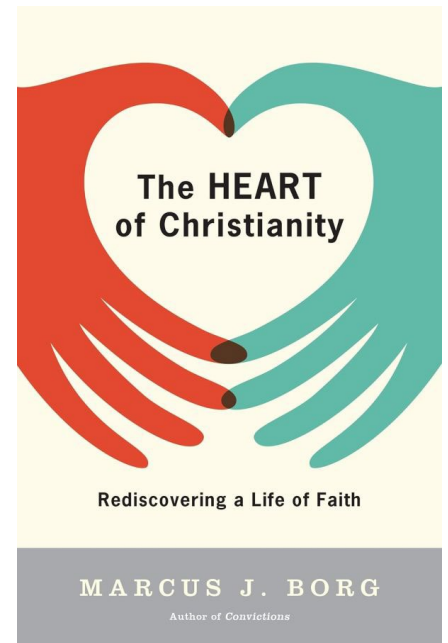
We will be supporting Katelyn's Birthday Project in January. Katelyn, the daughter of SHUMC members, Kari and Frank Moore, struggled daily with chronic respiratory and other health issues during her 22 ½ months of life. She touched many lives with her smile, laugh, and determination. Katelyn and her 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 \$25.00. 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.



Tuesday Morning Theologians New Book Study

All are welcome to join Tuesday Morning Theologians for our next study beginning January 2, 2024. Our next book will be **The Heart of Christianity: Rediscovering a Life of Faith** by world-renowned author Marcus Borg. Borg wants to show us, as today's thinking Christians, how to discover a life of faith by reconceptualizing familiar beliefs. Being born again, for example, has nothing to do with fundamentalism, but is a call to radical personal transformation. Talking about the kingdom of God does not mean that you are fighting against secularism, but that you have committed your life to the divine values of justice and love. And living the true Christian way is essentially about opening one's heart—to God, and to others. Above all else, Borg believes with passion and conviction that living the Christian life still makes sense.

Tuesday Morning Theologians meets at 9:00 in room 214 on Tuesdays. Ready to journey with us? For more information contact John Tedrick at johntedrick@me.com.



UWF Tuesday Lunch Bunch will be starting a new book on January 2. It is *The Upper Room Disciplines 2024, A book of Daily Devotions*.

The back of the book says:

“Pause for a few minutes each a day to center your heart and mind on God with The Upper Room Disciplines. Reading in this yearlong devotional book will help you find peace, comfort, and strength to the challenges of life and find hope for the future. Each week, a different Christian thought leader offers daily reflections and guides you to engage more deeply with scripture.”

We will be reading devotionals from the book and discussing them on Tuesdays from Jan. 2 to Feb. 6 at 11:30 in room 214. For information contact Kathy Tedrick, kathytedrick@me.com.



Suicide Prevention Training

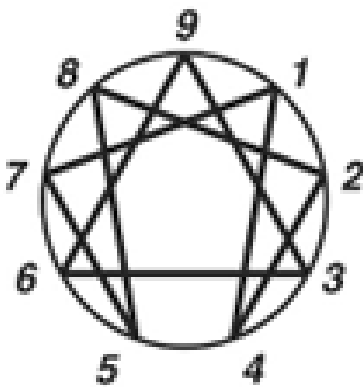
Thursday, January 11
at 7:00 p.m.

Join us for this **FREE**
training at:

Smoky Hill United Methodist Church
19491 E Smoky Hill Rd
Centennial, CO 80015

ASK A QUESTION, SAVE A LIFE

Learn how to offer hope through positive action. QPR teaches how to recognize the warning signs, clues, and suicidal communications of people in trouble, and then to ACT to prevent a possible tragedy. QPR training takes just 90 minutes and is taught in a format that is clear and concise. Come to this training and get the information to encourage a person to get help.



Courtesy of The Enneagram Institute

[This photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND](#)

Enneagram: Introduction Workshop Jan. 23rd taught by Patti Agnew

The Enneagram is an ancient system of 9 personality types. I have found it to be a very helpful tool to understand myself and navigate my way in this world. It reveals our personality type and offers pathways for transformation. I invite you to join me on a two-part journey of learning about the Enneagram and spiritual practices. We will start with a basic workshop on Tuesday, January 23rd from 7:00-9:00 pm. Then in February and March, I will offer a 6-week class to explore how the Enneagram can guide us into more fruitful spiritual practices. To take the class, you need to have a basic understanding of the Enneagram, and it will be most helpful if you have done the work to discern your number.

Part One: The Enneagram In this workshop on January 23rd, I will give an overview of the Enneagram and then focus on the 9 types and their wings. It is my hope that after this workshop, you will begin (or continue) your journey of

discerning and understanding your number. If that doesn't make sense to you, come learn about it 😊 All are welcome who want to learn more, even if you know your number and have been working with this for a while. Our experience will be more rich with all of us exploring together.

Part Two: Spirituality and the Enneagram In the class in February and March, we will explore the dynamics of the Enneagram and learn how the 9 enneagram types line up with spiritual practices. At the end of the class, you will have a personalized approach to spiritual practices that will enliven your spiritual life.

I am a student of the Enneagram, not an expert, just enough down the road to share my experience. My experience has taught me the Enneagram is very complex and dynamic, which is part of the richness of this tool. One can work with it for a lifetime and still keep learning. We are never masters of it, or of ourselves, for that matter. I invite you to join me on this journey of self-discovery and deeper connection with the living God.

Please register for the workshop by contacting Patti (pattia@smokyhillumc.org) or the church office (churchsecretary@smokyhillumc.org).

For other adult discipleship opportunities, see the digital newsletter.

SOCIAL JUSTICE



Amache Relocation Center

by Rebecca Runyan

This relocation center near Granada, Colorado was used during World War II to unjustly incarcerate Japanese Americans from 1942-1945. It is a place to reflect, recommit, and further the pursuit of freedom and justice.

Amache is largely intact today due to preservation efforts over the years by the Town of Granada, Amache Preservation Society,

formerly incarcerated people and their descendants, and other individuals and organizations dedicated to enhancing the public's understanding of Amache's significance.

In 2022 it was designated to be our newest National Park. The transition from the local preservation society to National Park will take about two years.

The Amache site is currently open with a self-guided audio tour and informational signs throughout. But be sure to watch for rattlesnakes on the grounds.

There is much more information regarding this relocation center on the National Parks website: <https://www.nps.gov/amch/learn/index.htm>. There is also additional information, including an online exhibit at the History Colorado website: <https://www.historycolorado.org/location/camp-amache-granada-relocation-center>

Smoky Hill UMC Abundant Health



January 2024

Focus: Addiction and Recovery

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – Ephesians 2:8

The experience of God's saving grace offers wholeness to each individual. In light of the reality of alcohol and other drug abuse, the church has a responsibility to recognize brokenness and to be an instrument of education, healing, and restoration. What does the UMC Book of Resolutions say about addictions?

[Book of Resolutions: Alcohol and Other Drugs](#)

MIND

Alcohol and Mental health

Alcohol and mental health are closely linked. People drink for many reasons: to celebrate, socialize, commiserate or drown our sorrows. We may drink to try and change our mood: to feel more relaxed, courageous or confident. However, the effect of alcohol is only temporary. As it wears off, we often feel worse because of how alcohol withdrawal affects our brain and body.

You may feel like alcohol is your coping mechanism: a way to deal with depression, stress, anxiety or other difficult feelings. You might be nervous about what life would be like if you stopped drinking or cut back. But relying on alcohol to manage your mental well-being can become a problem in itself. There's no shame in asking for help and exploring what a new relationship with alcohol could look like. Learn more at

[Alcohol and Mental Health](#) and [Alcohol Dependence and Substance Use Disorders NAMI](#)



BODY

Health Resources:

- Understanding Addiction [The Science of Addiction - NIH](#)
- [Physical and Mental signs of Addiction](#)
- [non-alcoholic drink recipes](#)
- [Exercise and Addiction Recovery](#)
- Talk to Your Child About Alcohol - [NIH teens and alcohol](#)

(For PDF links, see the digital edition of this newsletter.)

Recipe of the month:

Balsamic Roasted Brussels Sprouts

Here's a recipe for roasted Brussel sprouts that even the kids may like:

<https://www.eatright.org/recipes/snacks-and-sides/balsamic-roasted-brussels-sprouts-recipe>



Move that Body!



NEW!!! Zumba is coming to Smoky Hill. Christy Legleiter will be leading Zumba classes on Wednesday evenings from 5:30-6:30 beginning **January 17th** in either the celebration hall or the gathering space. Donations are accepted to help cover Christy's recertification costs (\$5 suggested)

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. Contact Susan Hora at cusaglass@gmail.com

Yoga is BACK! Starting again in January, Zachary Horan will be leading us in yoga on the first and third Tuesday of the month at 1:45 in the Celebration Hall. Bring a mat if you have one. Donations of \$7-10 per session are appreciated.

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

SPIRIT

Substance misuse and spiritual health



Matt Salis of thestigma.org writes: My name is Matt Salis, and I'm a high-functioning alcoholic in permanent sobriety. In my decades of studying the destruction of consistent and abusive drinking, both through personal experience and exhaustive research, I've learned a lot about the subtle and insidious transition from social, moderate consumption to addiction. The invisible line that separates controlled drinking from alcoholism can sneak up on us with devastating consequences. That's why I've put together these 17 questions to help you better evaluate your relationship with alcohol. The variety of the questions is designed to help you understand your relationship with alcohol no matter where you fall on the spectrum of concerned drinkers. The first 15 questions will give you a feel for where you stand. The last two questions, however, will tell you everything you need to

know about your future with alcohol. Learn more at: Do you have a drinking problem? [Do you have a drinking problem? \(soberandunashamed.com\)](#). Find resources *(For PDF links, see the digital edition of this newsletter.)*

Where can people find a spiritual community for addicts, loved ones of addicts and Spiritual Refugees? In the Denver area, the UMC's Free Spiritual Community is such a place. Learn more at <https://freespiritualcommunity.com/>

Join us on Facebook!

[\(20+\) Smoky Hill UMC Abundant Health | Groups | Facebook](#). This is the place to connect about hikes, bowling, kayaking, fishing, and new recipes!



ZUMBA[®]

fitness

**SMOKY HILL UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH**

**NEW ZUMBA
CLASS
STARTING
JANUARY 17TH!**

**Suggested donation of
\$5 a person**

**CLASS EVERY
WEDNESDAY @ 5:30-
6:30**

Join Christy Legleiter,
certified Zumba instructor,
for a fun, dance fitness
class for all levels and ages!



Smoky Hill United Methodist Church
19491 E Smoky Hill Rd
Centennial, CO80015
303-690-9816
www.smokyhillumc.org

Email all information and updates for church communications to churchsecretary@smokyhillumc.org

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