



Dear Church Family,

I do not miss rush hour in Austin. But interesting things did happen when I was stuck with my kids in the snarl. I still remember the conversation that came up one gridlocked evening when my teenage daughter, Anna, decided to play me a video that was setting the internet on fire. “Just listen, Mom. Then tell me what you hear. It will either be ‘Yanny’ or ‘Laurel.’”



She hit play and waited, watching me carefully. “You hear ‘Laurel,’ right Mom? Right??” I glanced over at my child. She had to be pulling my leg. Because I did NOT hear “Laurel.” A weird digital voice was saying “Yanny.”

But Anna assured me, *promised* me, *swore to me* that she heard the totally different word, “Laurel.” (If you’re interested in seeing what you hear, you can try it here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7X_WvGAhMIQ).

As it turns out, it’s all a matter of what tones your ear is most naturally tuned to listen for. About 47% of us hear one, 53% the other. Here is an explanation, if you’re interested: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yDiXQI7grPQ>

Anna explained how this little video was setting the internet on fire, making the news and dividing families. It made me think of church. Of how we allow small things to divide us. In fact, the history of churches and communities of faith seems to be one of division and separation.

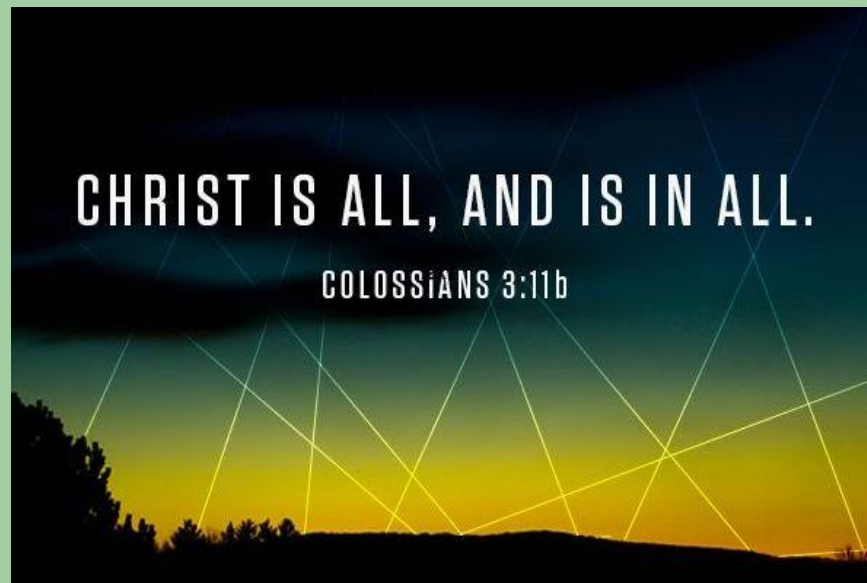
How beautiful then, that we get to offer an alternative. Greater than all that would divide you from those who sit next to you and worship online with you each Sunday is this: Jesus is your Savior. He loves you, died for you, invites you to follow. Invites the greatness of his name to bridge over every Yanny/Laurel division in the world. From those that are small and stupid (a digital voice on a YouTube video) to those that have separated believers for generations.

As Paul put it: *In this new life, it doesn’t matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized, slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us. Colossians 3:11*

When people look at First UMC, they don’t see people who are all the same. They see the beautiful tapestry that God has created us to be. Even though we may passionately disagree in sports, voting, raising our kids or what that crazy digital voice is saying, when it comes to the heart of who we are, we are not divided.

We are a church family. For all. Serving all. A gift, a calling, an identity so much greater

than anything that threatens to divide us.



Here's what this amazingly diverse church family did to serve each other and this community last week:

- We are feeding the hungry for Thanksgiving! The food drive runs from now through this Sunday, November 15th. We hope to collect enough to fill 255 boxes to give to families who are hungry this Thanksgiving. It's not too late to collect food for these hungry folks. And, if you'd like to help us sort or pack, we've got spots on these days. Just contact Susan Hellums: shellums@mcfirst.com or [click here](#) to sign up with the Sign Up Genius page!
 - Sunday, Nov. 15, packing each family's meals into plastic sacks, 1:30-3:00pm
 - Monday, Nov. 16, Distributing food, 4-6pm
 - Monday, Nov. 23, Organizing food for distribution to Colonias, 10-11:30am

"First Fruits" Thanksgiving Baskets

**Packing, Organizing
& Distributing**

Opportunities to SERVE!
We Need Your Help!!


MON., NOV. 9th from 10am-12pm to PACK

SUN., NOV. 15th from 1:30-3pm to PACK


MON., NOV. 16th from 4-6pm to DISTRIBUTE

MON., NOV. 23rd from 10am-12pm to ORGANIZE

Be sure to sign-up online







-
- Mary Dillon has been such a tremendous help. Last week, she assembled each child's WOW bag for the coming month. Thanks to her gift of time, each child will have crafts and experiences as they learn about Jesus at home and online.



-
- We are starting a children's handbell choir! Children 4 years-old through third graders are invited to come learn how to make music with bells! Bells are a great way to make music and still stay healthy. Please contact Lee Ann Clemons at laclemons@mcfirst.com if your child is interested. And share this opportunity with kids who don't yet have a church family.



-
- Have you gotten a chance to meet our Wesley Nurse, Jacqui Hardin? Jacqui works with those in need in our community, providing health education and preventative programs. Jacqui's entire salary is a from Methodist Healthcare Ministries! Wow! A full time staff member, engaged in community outreach, that we receive as a gift! What a blessing! Look for her new office in the worship center.



-
- We applied for a grant to obtain an outdoor, inflatable screen and projector system and were approved! This will allow us to both hold outdoor worship services in our fields (to supplement those indoors, especially during COVID) and host family and community movie nights in our recreation fields. I'm so excited to be approved for this grant money and for how it will extend our ministry to new people in the community.



-
- Exciting news! The UMC in our area have received a grant to support immigration and refugee ministries. Susan Hellums has reached out to see if they would reallocate those funds towards supporting local students with an immigrant background. We have received clearance to work with STC to provide \$500 scholarships and a laptop valued up to \$1000 for 48 students! What a blessing!
 - A member of our church, knowing how tight the budget has been, offered an amazing gift. Starting this month and going through 2021, they have negotiated lawn care and pest control with vendors they use *and will be paying the bill!* This is an enormous blessing to us and such a gift to FUMC. Many thanks to this anonymous donor and their generosity.
 - October financial numbers are in and we're better. We were still over budget, but only by \$3,700. We are starting to see the effect of those hard budget choices and I'm hopeful as we move forward.

Just a reminder that you can:

- Worship **in-person** with us at 9:30am (Contemporary) or 11am (Traditional) in the sanctuary. Wear masks, practice social distance and leave food and drinks at home.

- OR...continue to worship with us online on YouTube at 9:30am (Contemporary) and 11am (Traditional). Those are livestreams! What you see is what's happening in real time.
- You can also watch the entire service online after the video has processed and posted. That is up to YouTube, not us, but usually happens by Sunday afternoon.

I look forward to seeing you, in person, or online, this Sunday as we continue talking about the Psalms and how they help us approach God with *all* our emotions.

Pastor Laura

STAY CONNECTED THROUGH ONE OF THESE SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS



WWW.FUMCMCALLEN.COM