



God tells us, “The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”
(1 Sam 16:7)

Dear Church Family,

I remember a Christmas Eve, many years ago now, when I was newly appointed at FUMC, New Braunfels. That evening, the worship space glowed with candles and warm light, the tree gleamed, the poinsettias colored the altar with reds and greens. Everyone looked amazing- happy faces, bright eyes, beautiful clothes.



And then my daughter ran down the aisle. Anna was Asher's age, just 4 years old. She and her sister would always break into a run, right down the center aisle, to give me a hug whenever they first caught sight of me. It was one of my favorite parts of the week- that joyful running hug. But that night, I was horrified. Leah was cute as a button, wearing the velvet dress and matching shoes and bow that I'd laid out for her. But Anna wasn't wearing the Christmas dress I'd set out. She was wearing... a cotton play dress. Oh no! I made big eyes at Kevin and tried to ask, without words, what had gone wrong. He said brightly, perhaps a little apologetically, “Anna really wanted to wear this dress for Jesus' birthday.” She smiled up at me in confirmation. “Oh, no,” I thought, “Jesus doesn't want this dress. He wanted the nice dress. The one I laid out.”

I am ashamed to say I thought more about what my daughter was wearing and what other people were thinking of us than I ever should have that Christmas Eve. Since then, God has brought me back to that night throughout my ministry. And to the reason Anna wore a cotton sundress. Because that's the dress that helped her celebrate Jesus.

I got it wrong. Anna's heart was in the right place, not mine. God tells us,

“The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” (1 Sam 16:7)

As we answer God’s call to welcoming *all* people, especially those outside our walls, I want you to know that you can come as you are. **That over and over in scripture, God tells us that we are not to focus on externals like how others dress, but the internals like how we give, how we serve, the depth of our love and humility.**

You’ll see me and Pastor Jon modeling this approach. One week, one of us will be a little more casual than the other. We want all people to see, through our clothing, that nobody will be turned away or looked down on for what they wear at FUMC McAllen.

I also look out and see you modeling that loving acceptance. Every week, there is such a beautiful variety of styles- everything from shorts all the way to suits I’m grateful for that welcoming spirit and for the good it will help us do as we share Jesus with our community. ! I hope that anyone who comes through our doors would know immediately that they are welcome, just as they are, no change of clothing required.

Ways to Serve This Week:

- Have you started decorating your home for Christmas? We are just getting started here and we would love your help! If you would like to join in the fun, please join us on Tuesday, November 24th, in the Sanctuary at 10:00 a.m. Contact Lee Ann Clemons at laclemons@mcfirst.com if you need any additional details or have any questions.
- We have a few maintenance things to take care of in the gym and in the sanctuary and they both require an Articulating Boom Lift. We do not have one of these so we will have to rent one, which is no small cost. By any chance do you know if anyone has one we can borrow? Or do you have the means to pick it up and return it to save the church over \$330 in delivery fees? Our plan is to use it on Thursday, December 3rd, before the busy Christmas rush. If you can help, please contact Charlene Simmons at the church office or email her at csimmons@mcfirst.com



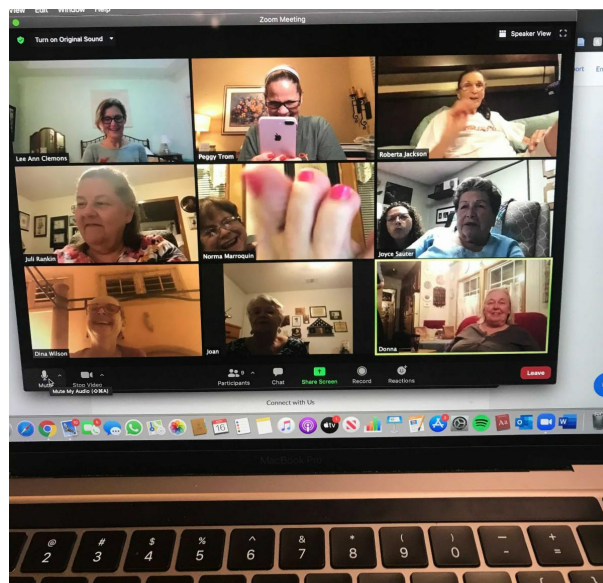
Need:
Articulating Boom Lift

Here are some highlights from last week and a hopeful look at the week ahead.

- Emily's Meals is dedicating their fall picnic this Sunday in memory of our Dennis Trom. Dennis was a founding member of the FUMC Emily's Meals team and he was the definition of loving neighbor with a cheerful heart! The picnic this Sunday at Archer Park invites our homeless neighbors to gather for food, clothing, toiletries, etc.. Peggy will be there, representing our team.



- This following picture was from the women's Zany Zooming last night. It was so fun and very Zany!!! Thank you to Norma for sharing her beautifully painted toes!



- We were so pleased when our friends at C.A.M.P University asked if they could partner with FUMC McAllen for their November Giving Tuesdays. This week they decorated and stuffed the envelopes holding the letter enclosed in our First Fruits Thanksgiving boxes. Thank you to our C.A.M.P. U. friends

for helping us to reach out to others in need! Here is a great picture of Carolyn with the sock puppet she made to hold the new pair of socks for a child in need.



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- Susan Hellums and a team of folks from FUMC is working with STC, Baylor Hunger Initiative, and other community partners to build a community teaching garden onsite! If we can find grant funds, planting a large garden would supplement the canned food with fresh fruits and vegetables at our Manna Food Pantry. We dream of the day when anyone could come to a cooking class at FUMC and at the end, receive a bag of fresh and canned food that they could then use to prepare those meals! We dream of a mobile kitchen that we could take into the community to do on-site classes. We dream of a place where college students can come put their skills to use feeding the hungry along the border. It would be a huge blessing to the hungry in our community and provide a place where agriculture students could gain hands-on experience.
 - We are excited to announce that we are starting a children's hand bell choir for 4 year olds through third graders! Keeping the health and safety of the children and all involved top priority, our goal is to be ready to share a Christmas song with our church family in December. Contact Lee Ann Clemons, laclemons@mcfirst.com, for more information.



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 am so honored to be the pastor of a church like this and hope to see you, in-person or online, this next Sunday as we talk about some of the bad girls in Jesus' genealogy and what they have to teach us.

Pastor Laura

Let's stay connected church family | [FUMCmcallen.com](https://www.FUMCmcallen.com)

