



Northern Hills network

JANUARY—MARCH 2022

CELEBRATION

Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, [a]saying,

“Thus far the LORD has helped us.” 1 Samuel 7:12

Twenty years ago, a group of faithful Christians gathered at the 1604 location to celebrate the relocation of their church building from Higgins Road, which became the new campus for Northern Hills UMC.

One amazing story to share is about the first outdoor Easter Morning worship service which was held on March 31, 2002. The building was not “officially” open yet, but the excitement to gather brought everyone out to gracefully adapt to their new surroundings. Some of the members volunteered to set everything up the night before to be ready for the early morning service. Two of the volunteer members even slept in their trucks overnight in the parking lot to be sure that no one would tamper with, or remove the preset equipment! In the morning, the people gathered and proclaimed the resurrection of Christ!

Another amazing Easter story happened five years ago on April 16, 2017. The day prior, a group of volunteers gathered again at the new Ministry Center campus to prepare for the first worship service at the Naco Pass location. In the middle of removing plastic bag coverings from the new furniture, setting chairs in the building, and cleaning tables; a man came to see what was happening. This man talked to one of our members and minutes later he said, “I wish to be baptized,” so with a joyful heart the man kneeled in the chapel and became the first baptism at the Ministry Center location before it was officially open.

This year, my dear NHUMC family, is a year of CELEBRATION. We will celebrate that 20 years ago God gave vision to this congregation to relocate to a place that would empower opportunities of sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This year we will also celebrate the 5th year anniversary of our conventional expansion in planting the NHUMC Ministry Center.

I invite you to be prepared for 2022! We will celebrate our living witness, a tangible and visible place, where we can proclaim what we sing on Easter Sundays,

“Because he lives, I can face tomorrow
Because he lives, all fear is gone
Because I know, I know he holds the future
And life is worth the living, just because he lives”

May the celebration of 2022 inspire us to continue being a part of God’s story to **Reach** others for Jesus, **Teach** the ways of Jesus, and **Love** the world for which Jesus died, so that God is glorified through His Son.

Bendiciones de Dios,

Sr. Pastor Lupina Stewart

Announcements



How Firm a Foundation The Year of "Ebenezer" Sermon Series Begins January 2, 2022

2022 marks 20 years for NHUMC at the 1604 campus and 5 years at the Ministry Center Campus. This would not have been possible by people's power, but by the Grace of the Lord, who in His mercy, has decided to empower a group of people in San Antonio, Texas to impact the community around them as well as sections around the world.

This is not something that we take for granted. This is a proclamation of the reality of God in the present era. This is about proclaiming that the relevance of the "simple gospel" is still transforming lives and changing communities.

It is through this entire year that we want to celebrate and proclaim that the Lord who was here with us, leading over 40 years ago as Northern Hills UMC, 20 years ago at the 1604 property and 5 years ago in the Ministry Center. God is the one who wants to keep us in the infinite game of His Kingdom.

This sermon series has the purpose of remembering, learning, embracing, and accepting our roots as NHUMC and what it has been its history. This history shapes who we are as congregation and will give us power for the next generations.

Moving On

The Moving On group is back!!! They are a group of widows and widowers that meet once a month for lunch and great fellowship. All newcomers are welcome to join. Call Maxine Webber at 210-451-9162 for more information. The scheduled lunches are listed below:

January 15 - Bourbon Street
February 19 - Salsalitos Cantina
March 19 - Delicious Gardens

Worship on Wednesday

W.O.W. Questions

Begins January 12, 2022

Winter 2022

Bible Studies and Classes

Beginning in January

More information coming soon.

Stamp Alliance Ministry

Thank you for saving your used postage stamps. The Stamp Alliance Ministry sells them to dealers and the money is used to buy Sunday school materials in Spanish speaking countries. If you lick it or stick it, it's a good stamp. Just cut it off the envelope with at least 1/4 inch margin. The collection box is on the desk in the Gathering Area. Keep on saving! For more information contact Ruth Graeter at ragraeter@yahoo.com or the UMW Circle of Love.

Northern Hills Day School Open Registration for

2021-2022



February 24
9:00 am
in the Gathering Area

Pastors Patrick's Pen

"Humor is the prelude to faith and laughter is the beginning of prayer." Reinhold Niebuhr

It's the first of the year. And I know a few of you have chosen and are leaning into your New Year's resolutions, some of you might be succeeding. Some of you might have already hung up that mantle as too hard, too challenging, or just plain annoying. I might be among you. I always seem to make New Year's resolutions and sometimes I keep them.

I want to add one to you. I want to add one that is easier than the rest. I would like for you to prayerfully, prayerfully consider adding Humor to your New Year's resolutions.

Why would Patrick recommend humor as a new year's resolution?

I believe that humor is something that sustains us. But being funny or at least making yourself laugh is an important part of our faith movement. So many times, we laugh with our friends, we laugh with our families, we laugh with our coworkers. I believe we can find humor all around us. One of my favorite professors on preaching, Dave Ward, says if you find the humor and the tragedy in each Bible verse or story, you have your sermon halfway done. I agree!.

I'd like to share with you the source where I get lots of laughter and joy. It might sound crazy, but I find that GK Chesterton, is one of the funniest men I've ever read. Not only in the clever British wordplay that I like, but because I find that truth and humor are close cousins. I wanted to provide you all with a few quotes from him.



Art, like morality consists of drawing the line somewhere.

Do not free the camel of the burden of his hump. You may be freeing him from being a camel.

Fallacies do not cease to be fallacies, because they become fashions.

I believe in getting into hot water. I think it keeps you clean.

Journalism consists largely in saying, Lord James is dead, to people who never knew, Lord James was alive.

Merely having an open mind is nothing. The object of opening the mind, as of opening the mouth is to shut it again on something solid.

Moderate strength is shown in violence, supreme strength is shown in levity.

No man knows he is young, while he is young.

One of the greatest disadvantages of hurrying is that it takes such a long time.

The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting. It has been found difficult and left untried.

The poor have sometimes objected to being governed badly. The rich have always objected to being governed at all.

The reformer is always right about what is wrong. He is generally wrong about what is right.

To be clever enough to get all the money, one must be stupid enough to want it.

The whole modern world has divided itself into conservatives and progressives. The business of progressives, is to go on making mistakes. The business of conservatives is to prevent the mistakes from being corrected.

Now I'm not certain if you liked any of these quotes or not. I really enjoy them. Some of them are funny, some of them are clever or insightful. If you want more from Chesterton, I recommend the Everlasting Man, it is best experienced as an audio book.

So, what is the challenge for you? Take stock of your sense of humor. Have you put this valuable gift from the Lord to service of yourself and others? Have you used humor to wound or to control others? Or have you leveraged in over anger, bitterness, and frustration. This is your chance to place a resolution and a revolution inside your voice. Make it something that you use to defuse situations, that you use to encourage, that you use to take a breath, when you're frustrated, exhausted, angry, or bitter. The ability to find the tragedy and the humor in every situation just isn't the key to a good sermon. I believe it might be the key to a good life.

Abi Leon, Media Director



I'm a huge believer in the power of storytelling. Any person, group, community, issue or ideal can be more clearly understood (and received) when we read or know the context of how that person or concept arrived at where they are.

THIS IS MY STORY...

Looking back at this point in my life I can't consider it anything less than "non-sequitur divine orchestration." These were a series of events that, at first glance, seemed to not make sense but led to the decision to join the US military. I joined the U.S. Army in 1997 and later, in January of 2005, received my Honorable Discharge. I also had the amazing experience of taking part in the US Army Soldier Show of 2004.

In 1999 I met the one person who would impact me the absolute most from then until now. I met my wife through a mutual friend from church. This friend had asked if I was interested in having a pen pal. Yes, a pen pal! We would go on to write to each other and be married less than one year later. We've been married 21 years and have since had 5 amazing children together.

In 2009, both my wife and I did a 3-year 'tour' in Oklahoma where we both graduated from Bible College. Although I had been in the audio industry for 15 years at the time, there is where I was introduced to a lot more live event audio engineering, and I got my first formal introduction to video broadcasting. I would later become an instructor at the same college. As I implied before, I've always had a love for the arts and this was just furthering the technical side of that. This practical experience and additions to my skill set would put me in front of people that would further my career trajectory. When arriving back in Texas, specifically the San Antonio area, I would then earn my Bachelor's Degree in Digital Cinematography and further gain even more experience in the live-streaming industry.

I've worked full-time to varying degrees for church ministry since 2006. However, presently is where I've become more purposeful with my creative intents. I've learned that I am the sum total of the stories I tell myself. How I view my past can be interpreted by me as I choose. By that I mean, do I search for and take away a life lesson or do I wallow in its hard-learned lessons? Is there a gray area in that perception? And the \$64K question is...would I change anything about it? Everyone wants to. Everyone has at least half a dozen proverbial skeletons in their closet. So what does one do?

I continue my journey here at Northern Hills UMC. I've flourished here and I've let old ways of thinking and doing die or fade away. I'm excitedly looking forward to what's to come. I let life deal with what it has to deal with and use those lessons to move past the function of doing and allow the same to create the next state of being. Before I can get there I feel honored to BE here...



Youth Fun

Volunteering with the youth in 2021 has been a great adventure with many rewards and excitement. From glam camp trips to Sunday School, you never know what you will find on your iPhone camera as an Adult Youth Volunteer! Thanks to Sterling Sparks & Avery Weaver for this great memory. You girls and all the senior high youth rock! I am enjoying teaching/learning Sunday School with this group on Sundays at 9:45 a.m. We need your help!

Please consider volunteering to help on Wednesday nights and/or on Sunday mornings. We have awesome youth here at NHUMC and you won't regret getting involved.

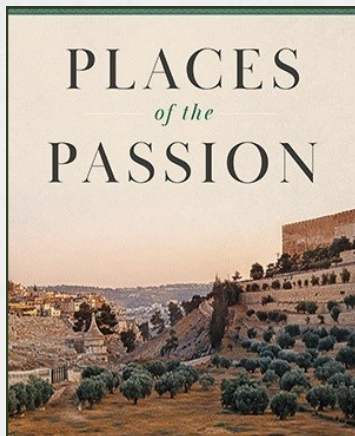
Contact Susan Bartlett at 210-654-0881, ext. 220 or email her at SusanB@nhumc.org

Growing up in NHUMC

From a young age Rachel Hopper has been interested in what goes on in the media booth of the Worship Center at Northern Hills UMC. Rachel has been joyfully serving as a youth volunteer on Sundays for the past 6 years. I was lucky to have her in the booth to work alongside me for 5 of those years on Sundays at the Contemporary Worship Services and at other special events. She hasn't mastered the sound board "yet" she says, but she helps with lighting, camera, and slides. You can typically find her every Sunday in the media booth. She graduated in 2021 from Madison High School and is attending college classes locally. You can also find her working at Whataburger, located at Nacogdoches and O'Connor Rd.

If your youth is interested in volunteering at NHUMC, let me know and we will find a place for too. Thank you Rachel for your many years of volunteer service!

Susan Bartlett can be reached at 210-654-0881, ext. 220 or email her at SusanB@nhumc.org.



Lenten Devotionals will be available February 27, 2022.



Ash Wednesday—March 2

1604 Campus

Drive thru Ashes to Go—8:15-9:30 a.m.

Ash Wednesday Service, 6:30 p.m.

Ministry Center Campus

Ashes to Go beginning at 6:00 a.m.
and will continue throughout the day.

Budget Information

Northern Hills has been extremely blessed with resources during the past year even in the face of the pandemic. Our giving has been exactly on par with our budgeting. However, our budget is a plan and I'm reminded that God doesn't operate on a monthly or yearly budget but is constant.

In the past year, we were one of the few congregations that have had no layoffs and in fact have added staff to accomplish new ministry needs like online services. Our budget is setup to prioritize staff that can enable laity to do ministry. In other words, our spending reflects programming that is staff and laity driven not program dollar driven. The staff salary for each program area is a big portion of each budget. We spend a large amount of our total income on staffing and have one of the most robust programs in the conference. Our new initiatives like infant class in our Day School, live streaming worship, outside worship, W.O.W., and others were made possible with a collaboration of staff and the congregation. Your staff includes 17 full-time, 7 part-time, and 27 Day School employees. Each of these employees enables NHUMC to achieve our goals to *Reach, Teach, and Love* our community.

When you look at our budget think of how we "reach people for Christ" and how your tithes and offerings are making a difference in His world.

Pastor Abdon

I recently read a devotional centered around the Chinese bamboo tree. This tree is actually classified as a grass, but anything that can grow up to 115 feet high is a tree to me. The bamboo tree does absolutely nothing--or so it seems--for the first four or five years. Then suddenly it shoots up ninety feet in sixty days. Would you say that bamboo tree grew in six weeks, or over several years? From what I could learn, the tree has been growing underground for years developing a root system that can support this tremendous growth once it becomes visible above ground.

Sometimes ministries are like that. We work at a ministry or ministries for years developing relationships and trust and then things start to happen. I recently came across a letter that I included in the January 2017 "Network" and it started like this:

The Ministry Center is now under construction! As the renovation continues it is interesting to see the walls to the sanctuary, classrooms and other parts of the building taking shape. As I walk through the building and think about how we are called to be the "hands and feet" of Christ, I start to imagine how the Spirit of Lord will be moving at the Ministry Center.

This April will be five years since the Ministry Center opened its doors to the community. It is hard to believe how quickly five years have passed. In that time, God has been using our church in many amazing ways. Thousands of people have been helped through our educational ministries (i.e.; tutoring, ESL, citizenship, GED, and reading), our food pantry, our community events, our volunteerism, and our community service. God has truly helped us to be the "hands and feet of Christ" into our community.

With all these great things happening we are making a huge impact in the community. But what if all that has happened over the last five years, is only the foundation for what will be happening in the next few years? This year Methodist Healthcare Ministries will begin their work on the new clinic that will be established on the former "China Sea" property across from the Ministry Center. This new facility will bring new opportunities for us to serve the community in exciting ways.

As I write this, in November, we had meetings with representatives from throughout the community. The purpose is to identify community assets, community needs and service gaps that could be addressed by this new clinic, our community partners, and the NHUMC Ministry Center.

We may not know for certain how God will use us at this point, but I am confident that we have established a good, strong, and deep foundational root system that can sustain tremendous growth of ministries in the future. I am looking forward to seeing what God will be doing in our church and community over the next year.

Blessings,
Abdon

Peanut Bowl

Give school children a challenge of collecting jars peanut butter to feed a community that needs food and you get.....

5513 jars of peanut butter



Peanut Butter Bowl



Susanna Watson, Youth Director



Hi! My name is Susanna Watson, and I am so excited to be joining the Northern Hills UMC team as the Youth Director. Just a little info about me, I grew up in northern Louisiana in the small town of Homer. I was blessed to grow up in a Christian home where my parents put an emphasis on making sure that my 2 sisters and I had a personal relationship with Jesus and were disciplined well. While in college and trying to determine what my life path would be, I felt God's call on my life to enter vocational ministry. My first opportunity for that was a youth ministry internship. From that very first day on the job, I fell in love with youth ministry. I've been serving in youth ministry in some capacity over the last 11 years, and every day is a new adventure. I love helping teens discover a truly personal relationship with Jesus, what their gifts and passions are and how to use those as members of the church, and training them as servant leaders through missions. I enjoy seeing how God is shaping them and empowering them to not only be the church of the future, but the church of today as well. Seeing students act as the hands and feet of Christ is one of the greatest joys I get to experience as a youth minister. I look forward to getting to know the students at Northern Hills and experiencing all the amazing things God has in store for us together.

Family time is very special to me, and I try to get as much of it as I can. I am the proud aunt of 2 nieces and 1 nephew, and we enjoy all the laughs we get to have together. I have 2 Australian shepherd dogs named Darcy and Lizzie Bennet who are absolutely spoiled rotten. Some of my hobbies and interests include hiking, camping, writing, watching football, and going to Dallas Stars hockey games. I love Mexican food and I'm really excited about all the breakfast tacos I get to have living in San Antonio. I moved to Texas 10 years ago, and I love living here. I'm looking forward to living in San Antonio and being so close to hill country.

Looking forward to meeting you all and getting to know one another. I can't wait to start our journey together!

NHUMC Prayer Walking Trail

NHUMC is building a prayer walking trail around the perimeter of the 1604 campus parking lot.

It will connect eight stations based on the eight Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-10). Each station will consist of a plaque with a particular scripture verse on it and shaded stone benches for seating. A mulched path will lead between most of the stations. Over time, plants will be selectively added to the trail and stations for beautification and developing habitat for birds and pollinators.

This existing space outside the Sanctuary will be integrated as one of the eight stations and includes the same limestone benches that will be used at each.

There are several reasons for developing this Prayer Walk:

1. To provide quiet places for individual/corporate prayer and reflection, as well as for Bible studies, Sunday school classes, etc. to gather. This will empower discipleship and spiritual formation.
2. To contribute toward the ongoing development of an "outdoor campus" at NHUMC's 1604 location. This trail would intentionally showcase many beautiful existing features of the local landscape at 1604.
3. To serve as a point of entry for the broader community. This can include regular devotional use by individuals and community partnerships with organizations.

4. To cultivate natural wildlife habitat as an expression of creation care. We are exploring a partnership with the National Wildlife Federation under their "Sacred Grounds" program. This would make NHUMC the first church in Texas to participate in such a partnership, and it could serve as a model for other faith-based organizations.

We have already met several times with representatives of the San Antonio River Authority (the Museum and Mission Reach River Walk projects), who have coached us on particular plants to cultivate on the 1604 campus toward developing a better habitat for birds and pollinators.

Todd Phillips is heading the team for developing this project. He can be reached at texasvettwp@gmail.com if you have any comments/questions or wish to volunteer in any way. Thank you in advance for your support.



Walk to End Alzheimer's

On behalf of The Walk to End Alzheimer's and team Northern Hills UMC, **Thank You Very Much for your support!**

With your help, our team was able to raise over \$1400 in only our second year participating in the San Antonio Walk.

The goal for the San Antonio Walk overall was met **107%**! \$628,709 was raised, and over 70% of this money will be used locally.

Thank you so much for your participation!



Soldiers' Angels

For a second year Northern Hills UMC sponsoring a food distribution event. Soldiers Angels distributes food to veterans in need and their families. Thank you to our Military Ministry and others who helped make this possible.



Children's Ministry

JANUARY 2022

W.O.W. Resumes

On Wednesday, January 12, Worship on Wednesday resumes. We always miss our W.O.W. time over breaks, so we'll be so ready to have the kids back! Join us from 5:30-7:30 p.m. Children Kinder-5th Grade are invited to join us for an evening of fellowship, fun, and worship!

FEBRUARY 2022

Early Release Extended Kids W.O.W.

On Wednesday, February 2 we will be having a special extended Kids W.O.W. time! Kids in grades kindergarten through 5th grade are invited to join us at the 1604 campus after school from 3:00-5:30 p.m. for some extra fun activities! Kids will also be welcome to stay for our usual W.O.W. program from 5:30-7:30 p.m. More information on this event will be coming soon. Watch for the announcement on the Children's Ministry weekly newsletter email. If you are currently not receiving the email, contact Katherine at KatherineR@nhumc.org.

MARCH 2022

Family Dine Out

Come celebrate the start of Spring Break with your church family! On Friday, March 4, take a night off from cooking and come meet up for dinner at Big'z Burger Joint (2303 N. Loop 1604 W., San Antonio, TX 78258). We'll gather there at 6:00 p.m. and you can stay and visit as long as you like!



Trunk or Treat Fun



Pajama Sunday



Fire Truck Day at the Day School



Northern Hills United Methodist Church
3703 N. Loop 1604 E.
San Antonio, TX 78247

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Christmas *Eve*

at Northern Hills United Methodist Church

Friday, December 24

1604 Campus 3703 N. Loop 1604 E. 210-654-0881

Worship Center: 3:00 p.m. — Traditional worship, in person only
5:00 p.m. — Contemporary worship, in person and online
7:00 p.m. — Traditional worship, in person and online
Sanctuary: 11:00 p.m. — Silent Night Traditional worship, in person only

Ministry Center Campus 4306 Naco Pass 210-236-6810

1:00 p.m. — La Roca (Bilingual), in person and online

Holy Communion and candle lighting at all services