

APRIL 2022 | ISSUE 4



ENGAGE

Go beyond to lead people of a hurting world into new life through Jesus Christ.

From the Pastor's Desk

When I was about 10 years old, several of us in our neighborhood were big into collecting baseball cards. It was a constant race to amass cards to ensure that we had the most cards. Then subsequently we looked at our favorite teams and players, and we traded ambitiously to get the cards that actually mattered to us. We took a little pride in the number of cards, but we took greater pride and care in the cards that really mattered. We counted the cards, but not all held the same weight in our eyes. The same is true in our lives and in the church. It's not just about counting, but it's also about weighing the things that matter.

THIS MONTH'S FEATURED ARTICLES

From the Pastor's Desk
To Service Sundays and
Beyond



From the Pastor's Desk continued

In the life of the church, we often think about what we do and attempt to measure our effectiveness in numbers—particularly things that are easy to count like attendance or the amount of the offering. And if those numbers are high or they are going up, we might be led to believe that we are doing what God wants us to do. And that may be true, but how would we know? Does scripture tell us that if the church has high attendance and high offering God is proud and that those are signs that we are doing God's will? It is possible to have high attendance and high giving and still not be faithful to the mission of Christ. Over the past few years, our staff team has been trying to develop a way for us to think differently about the things that matter most in the mission and ministry of Colonial Park UMC. We had a good start a couple of years ago, but then the pandemic struck. So we started again, and over the past year, we have worked to find ways to measure in a way that honors the weight of things that matter to complement the things that we can count. We measure using a series of questions that are centered on people and not numbers. Here they are:

- Who are the unchurched people entering their discipling journey? (New people)
- Who are the people engaged in intentional Christ-centered community? (Group that has an intentional up/in/out rhythm)
- Who are the people engaged in equipping opportunities for disciple leadership? (Sunday School/Bible Studies/Groups/Missional Community/Equipping Night)
- Who are the apprentice leaders? (Prospective leaders learning under current leaders)
- Which groups have tried new missional initiatives over the previous period? (monthly/quarterly/annual)
- Who are the people released into ministry over the previous period? (People leading new ministries/people leading in service/everyone serving regularly)

It's easy to see that this could be a counting exercise, but more importantly it is a way for our congregation to be intentional about offering opportunities and challenges for each of us to go beyond in our life of following Jesus. It matters that we are reaching and welcoming unchurched people to CPUMC. We want everyone to be in an intentional Christ-centered community. We seek to equip disciples for service and leadership as we become disciples who make new disciples.

The purpose of this is not simply to inform you. I want to challenge you. Take some time to reflect upon the weightier matters of this life of following Jesus. In Matthew 23:23, Jesus calls out the Pharisees for tending to the things that are easily counted and ignoring the weightier things of the law. I encourage you to lean into the weightier things of the law and the weightier aspects of our life together as disciples who are called to make new disciples of Jesus for the transformation of the world. Are you in Christ-centered community? Are you living into the three-dimensional life of Jesus? Let's not just count what we do, but let's put some weight behind it as we move forward together in faith.

OUTREACH MINISTRIES

Time to get the NCAA Basketball Tournament started. "You can not win if you do not play" is a song by Steve Forbert that seems to capture the moment. Picking the winners of the games is always a fun thing to do and of course picking the most winners gives you bragging rights till next year!

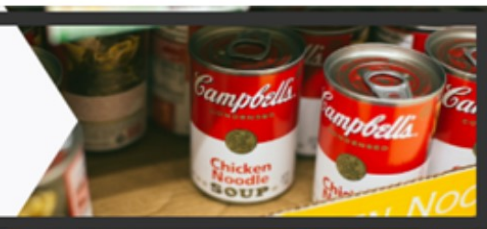
Why do they play the games anyway? Aren't heavily favored teams always going to win? I can assure you that this year's top picker of the winners will probably make their picks by uniform colors or their favorite mascots. That is exactly why they play the games 'cause you can't win if you don't play.

The teams can't play but 5 players at a time but, the team has 7 other players that contribute to the team's success. Point being it takes the entire team's effort to win or compete at a high level. The entire team pulling in the same direction for the team goal not their individual ones. There is no "I" in team.

God's Team is very much the same way. It takes a team effort, and we all have different skills that help move His Kingdom down the road. The rub is you cannot win if you do not play. Sitting in the stands and commenting on the game that others are playing does not make you a player it makes you a spectator.

You can not play the game without players but, you can play without spectators. Are you ready, willing, and able to do your very best for the team or are you reaching for the popcorn so you can watch and comment as others play the game?

U-Can Ministry



U-Can Ministry will be collecting the following items for the month of April:

- peanut butter
- canned fruit

DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRY

As we enter into April, we still find ourselves in the midst of Lent. Lent is a time of preparation and an opportunity to go deeper with God through personal reflection as we prepare our hearts and minds for Good Friday and Easter. Whether you've been engaged in Lenten practices or March has swiftly gone by without a thought about Lent, I encourage you to stop and let this season meet you where you are.

Since Ash Wednesday, we have had two tables set up with take-home contemplative spiritual reflections some of which pull scripture from the These Forty Days Lenten book. Two activities are outside of the Sanctuary and two activities are outside the gym.

I invite you to explore the following opportunities:

- Prayer Rock - Journal/Prayer Focus - Scripture - Color Page

Also, Terry Durham and Janice Jenks, whose faithful and creative spirits put this together, will be leading another Lenten excursion to Calvary Episcopal Church on April 8. Please join them to hear Mr. Justin Pearson, Community activist and co-founder, Memphis Community Against the Pipeline. Mr. Pearson has an unwavering commitment to social and racial justice for Memphis and for this country. He hopes his life preaches a sermon that will glorify God and honor his ancestors.

The program begins at 12:05 pm with lunch in the Waffle Shop to follow. For those who would like to carpool, they will meet at the Colonial Park at 11:00 am. Please sign up in the Colonial Park main office by April 6. Cost is for lunch only.

If you would like to discuss additional ways in which you can go deeper in your relationship with God, please feel free to reach out to any member of our Discipleship Ministry Leadership Team or contact Megan at mwarren@colonialpark.org.

TO SERVICE SUNDAYS AND BEYOND

On the first Sunday of every month, our youth group has a Service Sunday. This is where the kids get together, with the assistance of James and Staci Hissong, and make food for those who need it. For the first Sunday, the youth made brownies that were delivered to Room in the Inn as well as to individual families. They split up into two teams and worked hard to see which team could make the most delicious (and chocolatey) brownies. For the second service Sunday, the youth made Spaghetti. And when I say they made spaghetti, I mean it! They cooked up 10lbs of meat alone!! During this service day, they also learned just how exciting it is to wait for a large pot of water to boil.

As a leader, it has been wonderful to watch and participate with the youth in these service days. These kids don't just cook the food because their leader planned it, or because they are trying to reach service hours, but because they genuinely enjoy it. As a group, they have a heart for serving and are excited to help in whatever opportunities are presented to them. Because of their desire to help others, we have been expanding our service days and adding in new opportunities. Enter the Manna Bags...

The CP Youth and Kids were invited to come to church during their spring break and build Manna Bags. Together (with the help of Gary Vaughn and Gary Vanasek) we put together over 50 manna bags for the congregation to pick up and hand out. Witnessing this group of kids work together and learn from each other is the true definition of loving our neighbor as ourselves. These kids serve as a reminder to all of us that we aren't just here for the Sunday service, but to be in and of our community as well.



Mark Your Calendars!

4/4: Room in the Inn Serve Night
4/7: Mobile Food Pantry Distribution
4/9: Men's Breakfast @ 8:30 pm Fellowship Hall
4/10: Easter Festival @ 4:00 pm on the Front Lawn
4/14: JOY lunch @ 12:00 pm Fellowship Hall
4/15: Good Friday
4/17: Easter Sunday
4/18: Room in the Inn Serve Night
4/21: Mobile Food Pantry Distribution
4/28: Equipping Night



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ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED

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Join us Sundays for In-Person Worship at 9:00 am for Traditional Worship, 10:00 am for Sunday School and 11:00 am for Casual Worship. Not ready to be in-person yet? Catch us on Facebook or YouTube at 11:00 am @Colonial Park UMC. Or you may call the worship service hotline at 901-329-6527 to listen from your phone.

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Scan the QR code with your smartphone to go directly to Easy Tithe. This is an easy way to remain faithful to the ministries of Colonial Park.

This is a newsletter of Colonial Park United Methodist Church. The newsletter is published monthly & mailed third class, and e-mailed weekly except holidays.

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