

The 2023 US/Mexico Border Mission

by Tom Wall

Early in the morning of June 19, our WSUMC US/Mexico Border Mission Team gathered at Catholic Charities Respite Center in McAllen, TX, a border town across from Reynosa, Mexico. We were at the center to assist immigrants and refugees at the border who were awaiting asylum hearings. It took only a few minutes before some of our team were engaged in a conversation with a family from Venezuela. The woman and man (Darimar and Franklin) and two young children were trying to make their way to Denver where their sponsor was located. They were in McAllen to wait for the next year or so (without permission to work) until their case could be heard. The story is much longer, but we were able to help them make a connection in Denver and provide them with resources to assure a stable beginning to their time in the USA. The reality is that this family does not have the odds or the courts in their favor. Most requests for asylum are turned down and the asylum seekers are required to return to their home country. This one encounter that became so personal summerized all the themes of Washington Street's mission trip to the Texas/Mexico border—"service, learning, and solidarity."

The team, comprised of Pato Aravena, Mary Edmonds, John Evans, MJ Fox, Kay Ayers-Garren, Abby Kiesow, John Pannell, Mackin Wall, and Tom Wall, spent the rest of the day making



From left: Tom Wall, Abby Kiesow, MJ Fox, John Pannell, Kay Ayers-Garren, Pato Aravena, Mackin Wall, John Evans, and Mary Edmonds.

travel bags of food for the immigrants' onward journey, doing activities with the children who had just been released from ICE custody, and helping in the kitchen. Catholic Charities Respite Center helps immigrants take that first big step to a new life in the USA. The center provides meals, food for the journey, a bed for the night, showers, a pharmacy, medical care, and clothing. Most importantly, it provides the cheer and encouragement of the workers and volunteers



John Evans, Kay Ayers-Garren and MJ Fox help at Catholic Charities.



Left: Children in the Respite Center; Below, top: MJ Fox and Kay Ayers-Garren help prepare a large room and outer area for usage. Below, middle: John Pannell, MJ Fox, and Tom Wall hard at work. Bottom: A young child rides with Abby and Mackin.



and important information about the next steps to take to be legally and safely moved through the country and the bureaucracy of US immigration. In McAllen, the temperature at times hit above 110 F. Due to even stricter penalties just announced by the Biden administration for illegal entry into the USA, it was relatively quiet. Often the center can see more than a thousand people a day, but there were less than 200 that day.

Mary Edmonds was particularly impacted by the time we spent at Catholic Charities. "The children and their parents at the Catholic Charities Humanitarian Respite Center touched my heart in a big way. Most had traveled many miles from countries in Central or South America to seek asylum. One young man I met said that he only spoke Creole and Spanish. He had come from Haiti by way of South America and had learned Spanish on the journey. All parents sacrifice for their children, but these parents have left their own countries and extended families, whom they may never see again, and made tough, probably dangerous journeys. I can only imagine the conditions that drove them to leave their homes. The families at the Respite Center have been allowed to enter the United States, but still face many challenges. They must appear before a court where a judge will decide if they will be allowed asylum. I only wish that politicians and others who rail against immigrants could see these families who deserve our admiration and respect."

"One highlight for me was gaining insight into the process for applying for asylum. All are children of God worthy of special intervention as best we can provide. Our team made a difference in the lives of at least one family," said MJ Fox.

John Pannell also remarked on his experience. "I normally don't like working with kids, but I enjoyed working with the kids at the Catholic Charities Respite Center," he said. "We colored and played ball with them—which afforded the parents time to complete paperwork or just relax. They were so sweet and full of joy despite being in such a dismal situation. It really gave me hope."

The time on the Texas side of the border, in McAllen, TX,



included information/learning sessions with several non-profits, including Proyecta Azteca, an organization working to provide immigrants with affordable housing. We also made visits to several areas of the border wall. We were met at First UMC, McAllen by Willie Berman, a UM Missionary sponsored by the UMC Board of Global Missions. He and a co-worker from the mission, Fernando, drove us across the border to Rio Bravo where we would be based at Manos Juntas (Hands Together) ministry. Willie shared how he was called by God out of a business career to care for the people around Rio Bravo. Fernando and his wife, Consuella, had also experienced God's call to help those who were poor and had little advantage.

Our practical work over several days was to help prepare a large room that can be rented to the community for community and family functions. Painting and removing debris were the main tasks. The small charge for use of the

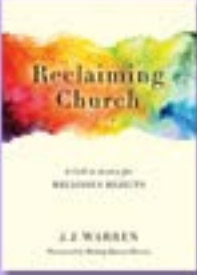
room would be used to make the project self-sustaining and to raise money for the other ministries. We also visited several other ministries including a school serving a poor community, a medical and dental clinic, and a daycare under construction that, when completed, will allow parents to freely work to earn a living income.

The faith and perseverance that we found among the people on both sides of the border were moving. We were inspired by immigrants who travel for months with small children in hopes of a new and better life, and we were inspired by Christians engaged in spiritual and social work to make communities in Mexico more habitable, thus reducing residents' need or desire to emigrate. In addition, our team from Washington Street enjoyed serving together. Indeed, Kay Ayers-Garren said that a highlight of the trip was getting to know the team members better.

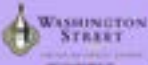
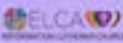
**RECONCILING NEXT'S
SUMMER PRIDE STUDIES!**

**WEDNESDAY, JULY 26, 2023
6:00-7:00 pm
Wesley Room & Zoom**

***Reclaiming Church: A Call to
Action for Religious Rejects***
by J.J. Warren
Facilitator: Jim Lane
Group discussion of the book.



**Email Jim Lane
at jlane@columbiasec.edu
to sign up!**

Active Faith is collecting vases!

Active Faith is continuing to collect vases & baskets to sell to our florist. We will make several trips to deliver them.

If you have any vases of any size (especially standard sizes) that you wish to donate, please **bring them to the Flower Room**. All proceeds will go to Active Faith for their missions.



**Sing-Along
Messiah**

**Monday, December 11, 2023
7:00 pm
Sanctuary**

**UNDER THE DIRECTION OF
DR. LILLIAN QUACKENBUSH**



**wsmethodist.org/sam
NOW SEEKING DONATIONS!**



VBS 2023 Was Stellar!

by Sarah-Kate Gravely



Washington Street UMC held Vacation Bible School this month from July 10-15, in the mornings in Threatt Hall. We were excited to blast off with the theme “Stellar” where children learned about all the ways we can Shine Jesus’ Light in the world around us. The congregation has been connecting to each day’s themes from our VBS program through the sermon series this month. You can catch up on the series on our YouTube channel (youtube.com/c/WashingtonStreetUMC). More photos are available on our Facebook page at facebook.com/washingtonstreetumc.

This year we were thankful to have 35 children sign up for our VBS program. Ten of those 35 were from the Red Room in the Child Development Center. Each day we gathered in the morning for some fun and singing, and then three Stellar Crews broke up into groups to do crafts at the Imagination Station, learn about each day's bible story at Bible Adventure, and of course, have a snack at the Re-Fueling Station! At the end of each day, we ran off some extra steam during game time.

Vacation Bible School is a fantastic opportunity for young children who may not have a church home to experience the warm presence of caring adults in a church building. Every morning, I was blessed to lead the adult volunteers in a small devotion to help prepare them for the day. Our Vacation Bible School wouldn't have been possible without their help. I'd



Robbie Douglas entertains one of our VBS kids while Lisa Douglas enjoys the scene.

like to take this opportunity to thank each person who had a hand in the success of this program: McCullough Adams, Swann Adams, Thompson Adams, Heidi Ankey, Jane Arp, Kendria Badger, Susan Caskey, Heidi Conte, Robbie & Lisa Douglas, Licia Jackson, Ann Jessup, Mary Lide, Andrea McAtee, Kristie & Hayden Rowe, Debra Schooler, Mary Slade, Christine Taylor, Lindy Walker Woods, and Kathy Wright. These people made the week amazing!

Sometimes people may wonder why we put so much effort, time, and money into just one week of VBS. Not every child who registered came to every day of VBS throughout the week. Some of them only got to experience the last two days. But I can assure you that the impact of VBS will last long after the week is over and the impact will spread beyond the child who attended. Each child who attended VBS learned about a bible story they had never heard before. Each child received a healthy snack and ate their food while talking about their day with attentive adults. Each child met a new friend and engaged in conversation with someone new. Each child spent time in a church building where they learned that some church buildings can be a place of safety and love.

I'd like to thank Washington Street for being a "Stellar" example of love and acceptance to the children we impacted at this year's Vacation Bible School. I am planning a Winter Bible School later this year where we will have another chance to spread God's message of love. If you're interested in helping out with Winter Bible School, please reach out to me!

— Peace, Sarah-Kate



Above: Susan Caskey tells her young group a story. Left: the children enjoy "re-fueling" with Debra Schooler. Below: Group leaders, Swann Adams, Christine Taylor, Ann Jessup and Kendra Badger with their group of "littles."



Sunday School Updates

- **The Aldersgate Class:** The Aldersgate Class will begin a new study by *New York Times* bestselling author, Beth Moore entitled *Chasing Vines*. If you have ever tended your own garden, you know that the fruit is most delicious when you've seen it grow. In this study, she explores the ways God delights in watching things grow—and how the vineyard holds the secret to a more abundant and meaningful life. As she traces the metaphor through scripture, Beth uncovers how every part of our own lives—even the rockiest soil—can be used by God to make a difference for His Kingdom. Please join us in the Aldersgate classroom for a donut, coffee, and excellent fellowship. Our class meets in the Aldersgate classroom on the 2nd floor at 10:00 am. If you have any questions, please call David A. Anderson at 803-318-8821 or email him at danderson@richardsonplowden.com.
- **The Dawsey Class:** This Sunday, July 23, Tom Summers will teach pages 83-96 in *Do I Stay Christian?* by Bryan D. McLaren; that's Chapter 11: "Because Leaving Hurts Allies (and Helps Their Opponents)", and Chapter 12: "Because Leaving Defiantly or Staying Compliantly Are Not My Only Options." Next Sunday, July 30, Carl Evans will lead a discussion of pages 97-120; that's Chapter 13: "Because... Where Else Would I Go?", Chapter 14: "Because It Would Be a Shame to Leave a Religion in Its Infancy," and Chapter 15: "Because of Our Legendary Founder." Class members who join from home will use FreeConferenceCall, and should call in between 9:50 and 10:00 am. The call-in number is (701) 802-5115. The access code is 7252934. For more information about the class, contact the class president Caroline Seigler at caroline.seigler@gmail.com.
- **The Grace Class:** On July 23, Ute Wachsmann-Linnan will lead the class with an introduction to the film series "The Chosen." On July 30, Vickie Voegeli will cover the topic: "Is your time of death predetermined?" Join us in person on the third floor or contact Jim Lane at jlane@columbiasc.edu for the Zoom link. We gather Sunday mornings at 9:45 am for fellowship and at 10:00 am for spiritual reflection.
- **The John Harper Class:** The John Harper class discusses lessons from Adult Bible Studies published by Cokesbury. For more information, contact Tracy Powers at tjpowers65@gmail.com.

[com](#) or meet with us in the classroom on the first floor by the elevator.

- **The Joy Class:** The class is currently partnering with Solomon's Porch studying the book of Acts and spending time with our neighbors. If interested, please contact Lee Haynes at lelandhaynesjr@gmail.com or Sylvia Stevens at sylviasaundersstevens@gmail.com for more information.
- **The Open Door Class:** The Open Door Class will finish the study of *Prodigal God* on July 23, and begin a new study on "Social Media and The Sermon on the Mount." In this study, we will discuss the principles Jesus laid out in Matthew chapters six and seven, and also the impacts of social media on today's society. Visitors are always welcome! The class meets in person on the third floor and via Zoom each week. For Zoom link information, contact Ann Jessup at jessup.ann@gmail.com.
- **The Paul Harmon Class:** The class is participating in a study from The Great Courses titled "How Jesus Became God" by Professor Bart D. Ehrman, the James A. Gray Distinguished Professor of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina. Dr. Ehrman is a New Testament scholar who focuses on the origins and history of early Christianity. We are enjoying the lessons and our discussions. All are welcome to join us on the third floor. If you have questions, please contact Suzanne Joye at sjoye@sc.rr.com.
- **Solomon's Porch:** The class meets in the Traxler classroom on the second floor and is led by Christine Taylor. The class is currently studying the book of Acts. Anyone interested is welcome to join! For more information, contact Christine at christine@wsmethodist.org.

STEWARDSHIP REPORT As of 7-20-23

General Budget: \$866,231

Church	\$373,344
Soup Cellar	\$42,148
Foundation	\$14,619

ATTENDANCE (as of 7-20-23)

July 16: 158 (in-person); 122 (online) = 280

July 9: 153 (in-person) 201 (online) = 354

July 2: 118 (in-person) 150 (online) = 268

June 25: 138 (in-person); 173 (online) = 311



Gifts (as of 7-20-23)*

*Some of these gifts were given at an earlier date and inadvertently not published at the time. We apologize for the omissions.

IN MEMORY OF RICK ROWE <i>to Active Faith</i> Given by Virginia Vaughan	IN MEMORY OF RICK ROWE <i>to the Flower Fund</i> Given by Sam Waldrep	IN MEMORY OF DOTTIE WEBBER <i>to the Soup Cellar</i> Given by Karen & Bobby Deas	IN MEMORY OF JIMMIE DAWKINS <i>to the Soup Cellar</i> Given by Thomas K. Dawkins
IN MEMORY OF RICK ROWE <i>to Active Faith</i> Given by Preston-Tyrone C. Adams	IN MEMORY OF RICK ROWE <i>to Active Faith</i> Given by Robert Boland	IN MEMORY OF DOTTIE WEBBER <i>to the Soup Cellar</i> Given by Nancy Whittle & Sandra Houck	IN MEMORY OF JIMMY DAWKINS <i>to the Soup Cellar</i> Given by Virginia Vaughan
IN MEMORY OF RICK ROWE <i>to Active Faith</i> Given by Gloria & Jim Apple	IN MEMORY OF DOTTIE WEBBER <i>to the Soup Cellar</i> Given by Virginia Vaughan	IN MEMORY OF DOTTIE WEBBER <i>to the Soup Cellar</i> Given by Dr. & Mrs. C.W. Hendricks	IN MEMORY OF JIMMY DAWKINS <i>to WSUMC</i> Given by Neva Clark
IN MEMORY OF RICK ROWE <i>to Active Faith</i> Given by Beverly & Paul McClanahan	IN MEMORY OF DOTTIE WEBBER <i>to the Soup Cellar</i> Given by Nancy Harvin	IN MEMORY OF DOTTIE WEBBER <i>to the Soup Cellar</i> Given by Jonte Auction/ Appraisal	IN MEMORY OF JIMMY DAWKINS <i>to WSUMC</i> Given by Nancy Whittle & Sandra Houck
IN MEMORY OF RICK ROWE <i>to Active Faith</i> Given by Nancy Whittle & Sandra Houck	IN MEMORY OF DOTTIE WEBBER <i>to the Soup Cellar</i> Given by Gloria & Jim Apple	IN MEMORY OF DOTTIE WEBBER <i>to the Soup Cellar</i> Given by Margaret & Michael Simpson	IN MEMORY OF JOAN BEAMER <i>to Sing-Along Messiah</i> Given by Wilma Winslow
IN MEMORY OF RICK ROWE <i>to Active Faith</i> Given by Nancy & Larry McWhorter	IN MEMORY OF DOTTIE WEBBER <i>to the Soup Cellar</i> Given by Ruth & Bud Tibshirany	IN MEMORY OF DOTTIE WEBBER <i>to the Soup Cellar</i> Given by Diana C. Wilson	
	IN MEMORY OF DOTTIE WEBBER <i>to the Soup Cellar</i> Given by Isabel Boggs		

Reconciling Next's June Book Discussion

Last month, the Reconciling Next Team had its first of a series of three book discussions. WS church members and several members from Reformation Lutheran gathered together in the Wesley Room to discuss Religious Trauma: Queer Stories in Estrangement and Return by Brooklyn N. Peterson.

The discussion was led by Jim Lane, who disseminated information about the author and his stories. The group discussed the book, and some shared their own stories of religious trauma in their pasts.

The next book discussion will be held on Wednesday, July 26 at 6:00 pm in the Wesley Room and on Zoom. The group will be discussing Reclaiming Church by J.J. Warren.

The book addresses three points of importance to young people looking to be part of a church community and a call:

1. The identity and nature of God,
2. The role of Scripture in discerning God's call to serve God.
3. The author's own experience of God, church, and identity.

In the final chapter, "We Are the Church," Warren focuses on practical and positive steps for joining voices, being heard, building bridges, and working together for young people to reclaim Church in their lives. Key features of this book:

- * Affirms the LGBTQ community and those who love them that the Church is for all.
- Inspires younger progressive people to stay within the Church and work to renew the call of ministry.
- Explores the Church's beginnings and emphasis on community.
- Calls readers to focus on practical and positive steps to reclaim Church in their lives.



Top: Paula Walters, Jan Baker, Cindy Cox, Jim Lane, and Gary Parish.



Above: Mona Higgins, and Dr. Ute. Left Sophie Farthing, and Taylor Beasley.

August Birthdays

August 1

Lydia Conte
Happy Henry

August 2

R.E.L. Freeman
Robert Horton

August 3

Pato Aravena

August 4

Joe Clark
Wyatt Rowe
Addy Lee

August 5

Karen Horne

August 6

Marcia Lane

August 8

Garry Stevens

August 10

Kelly McCook

August 12

Neal Woods
Ed McClain
Mary Sutherland

August 13

Buzzy Deas
Debbie Teague

August 14

Jeanie Sullivan

August 16

Shelley Stafford
Izzy Oehler
Christine Taylor

August 18

Kathy Rogers
Madison Matthews

August 19

Richard Shirley
Allyn Anderson

August 20

Jim Lane

August 21

Alma Louise Aravena

August 24

Nancy Holmes

August 26

Charles Garren

August 28

Jack Hurley

August 30

Dale Harsey

August 31

Laurely Nance

Prayer List

Betsy Alexander
Karen Basso
Martha Boynton
David Byrum
Mickey Epting
Pat Griffin
Betsy Halloren
Rev. Paul Harmon
Karen Horne
Lisa Johnson
Jean Kanes
Martha Helen King
Lin Fesperman Lord
Beverly McClanahan
Paul McClanahan
Sharon McCullough
David Middleton
Shawn Powers
Genie & Ron Quinn
Nancy Williams
Our homebound

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

Subject to change. *Denotes non-member event; **blue type** indicates WSUMC event or meeting. Please contact Jammie Watters at jammie@wsmethodist.org to schedule an event.

MONDAY | JULY 24

11:30 am-12:30 pm | Soup Cellar
Serving | Soup Cellar
1:30-2:30 pm | NA Meeting | Soup Cellar*

7:00-8:00 pm | Who is My Neighbor? A Summer Movie Discussion—"Won't You Be My Neighbor" | Wesley Room & Zoom

TUESDAY | JULY 25

10:00-11:00 am | Staff Meeting | Wesley Room

11:30 am-12:30 pm | Soup Cellar
Serving | Soup Cellar
1:30-2:30 pm | NA Meeting | Soup Cellar*

5:00-6:00 pm | RJAT Meeting | Zoom
6:30-8:00 pm | Private Group Meeting | Room varies*

WEDNESDAY | JULY 26

11:30 am-12:30 pm | Soup Cellar
Serving | Soup Cellar
1:30-2:30 pm | NA Meeting | Soup Cellar*

6:00-7:00 pm | Reconciling Next Book Discussion—Reclaiming Church | Wesley Room & Zoom

THURSDAY | JULY 27

11:30 am-12:30 pm | Soup Cellar
Serving | Soup Cellar
1:30-2:30 pm | NA Meeting | Soup Cellar*

FRIDAY | JULY 28

11:30 am-12:30 pm | Soup Cellar
Serving | Soup Cellar
1:30-2:30 pm | NA Meeting | Soup Cellar*

SUNDAY | JULY 30

11:00 am-12:00 pm | Worship Service | Sanctuary & live stream
4:30-6:00 pm | Youth Group | Youth Room

MONDAY | JULY 31

11:30 am-12:30 pm | Soup Cellar
Serving | Soup Cellar
1:30-2:30 pm | NA Meeting | Soup Cellar*

TUESDAY | AUGUST 1

11:30 am-12:30 pm | Soup Cellar
Serving | Soup Cellar
1:30-2:30 pm | NA Meeting | Soup Cellar*

6:00-7:30 pm | SPPRC | Zoom & Wesley Room

6:30-8:00 pm | Private Meeting | Room varies*

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 2

11:30 am-12:30 pm | Soup Cellar
Serving | Soup Cellar
1:30-2:30 pm | NA Meeting | Soup Cellar*

5:30-6:30 pm | CDC Board Meeting | John Harper Classroom

THURSDAY, AUGUST 3

11:30 am-12:30 pm | Soup Cellar
Serving | Soup Cellar
1:30-2:30 pm | NA Meeting | Soup Cellar*

FRIDAY, AUGUST 4

11:30 am-12:30 pm | Soup Cellar
Serving | Soup Cellar
1:30-2:30 pm | NA Meeting | Soup Cellar*

SATURDAY, AUGUST 5

7:30 am-5:00 pm | SC UMC Conference
Lay Servant Academy | Church-wide*

SUNDAY, AUGUST 6

11:00 am-12:00 pm | Worship Service | Sanctuary & livestream
4:30-6:00 pm | Youth Group | Youth Room

MONDAY, AUGUST 7

11:30 am-12:30 pm | Soup Cellar
Serving | Soup Cellar
1:30-2:30 pm | NA Meeting | Soup Cellar*

5:30-6:00 pm | Trustee Meeting | Wesley Room

FOR THE MOST UP-TO-DATE
CALENDAR, CHECK OUT THE REALM
CALENDAR

