What an honor it was to attend my second Annual Conference; the first where clergy and lay delegates for the General and Jurisdictional Conferences were selected. It was a great educational experience, and I am still soaking it all in! The organization for electing clergy delegates appeared to be more structured than the election of lay delegates. I would assume this is largely due to the name recognition among fellow clergy. In addition, I was very impressed by the level of negotiating that occurred, i.e. individuals supporting candidates would communicate to others to ultimately ensure those elected represented more progressive views over traditional views. Technology such as texting and visual chartering also helped in making the delegate elections run smoother and more effectively. Of course, there was a lot of drama that occurred to finally get to the final delegation, the majority being progressive. I was proud to represent FUMC Austin and use my vote to hopefully change minds and broaden ideas.

Workshop Sessions by Lauren Perry

On Friday afternoon, all the delegates attended different workshop sessions. There were eight different sessions delegates could choose from that covered topics ranging from church growth to marketing to worship outside of church walls. I attended a workshop called “Border Realities and How to Respond.” The session was led by Dr. Robert Lopez, El Valle and Coastal Bend District Superintendent. Dr. Lopez recounted heartbreaking stories from migrants and refugees who had escaped unimaginable and life-threatening violence in their countries of origin only to be detained at the U.S.-Mexico border. We also learned about the UMC’s Migration and Refugee Response Ministries in the El Valle District. Churches can partner with the Humanitarian Respite Center (HRC) in McAllen and Good Neighbor Settlement House (GNSH) in Brownsville. Both of these organizations provide essential items, such as snack bags, clothes, and hygiene kits, to migrants and refugees who are beginning their journey north to await their court dates. Lizzie Wright, the Executive Director of Justice for Our Neighbors in Austin, spoke about their ministry of providing free, high-quality immigration legal services to refugees and immigrants. The most important takeaway from this session for me was our undeniable call as Christians and Methodists to affirm the dignity and worth of migrants and refugees.

Worship Sessions by Cindy Walter

As is so fitting, the Annual Conference of our Rio Texas Conference opened with worship on Wednesday evening, and closed with the ordination worship service on Saturday. The opening worship was led by Bishop Robert Schnase. He preached on the theme for the conference, “We make the path by walking ~ hacemos el camino al andar.” The singing was led by a praise choir from San Antonio. English and Spanish were spoken and sung in beautiful harmony throughout. Bishop Schnase pointed out that the Rio Texas Conference is the only bilingual conference in the United States. The Service of Remembrance was held on Thursday evening. Two of our own previous pastors were remembered in this service: Dr. Jack Heacock, and Rev. Lon Speer. The culmination of the Conference was the Commissioning and Ordination service on Saturday. The choir from St. John's United Methodist in Austin provided the music for the service. The Bishop and closed with the ordination worship service on Saturday. The opening worship was led by Bishop Robert Schnase. He preached on the theme for the conference, “We make the path by walking ~ hacemos el camino al andar.” The singing was led by a praise choir from San Antonio. English and Spanish were spoken and sung in beautiful harmony throughout. Bishop Schnase pointed out that the Rio Texas Conference is the only bilingual conference in the United States. The Service of Remembrance was held on Thursday evening. Two of our own previous pastors were remembered in this service: Dr. Jack Heacock, and Rev. Lon Speer. The culmination of the Conference was the Commissioning and Ordination service on Saturday. The choir from St. John's United Methodist in Austin provided the music for the service. The Bishop

Other delegates from First Church were Sandy Wilder as well as Brooks Schuelke, Capital District Lay Leader, and Mary Fayie Raulolph, Capital District United Methodist Women President. Pastor Taylor and Pastor Cathy were there, of course, and we are delighted to report that Pastor Taylor was elected as a clergy delegate to General Conference 2020.

The entire group was pleased to represent our wonderful congregation by participating in the important work of the Annual Conference session, and would be glad to talk with any Sunday School class or other small group interested in learning more.
CALANDER
JUNE

Sunday
Sanctuary Worship Services 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. Sanctuary
Mercy & Justice 5th Sunday Presentation 10:00 a.m. SAN Wesley Hall

JULY

Sunday
Sanctuary Worship Services 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. Sanctuary
The Bible and Progressive Christianity Begins 10:00 a.m. SAN Wesley Hall
Second Chance VBS Volunteer Training and Luncheon 12:15-5:00 p.m. SAN Wesley Hall
Conversations on Racial Justice 4:30-6:00 p.m. FLC Garrison Chapel
All-Church Bowling Night at Westgate Lanes 5:00-9:00 p.m. 2701 West William Cannon
Registration Deadline for Cheers Ministry Movie Night fumcaustin.org/cheers
Registration Deadline for VBS: To Mars and Beyond fumcaustin.org/vbs

11 Thursday
Cheers Ministry Movie Night: The Sting 6:30 p.m. Stateside Theater, Paramount

14 Sunday
Sanctuary Worship Services 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. Sanctuary
Retiree Recognition Sunday 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. Sanctuary
Marriage Equality Resolution Churchwide Vote 12:15 p.m. Sanctuary

19 Friday
Vacation Bible School Workday 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. SAN Wesley Hall

20 Saturday
Vacation Bible School Workday 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. SAN Wesley Hall

21 Sunday
Manna Bag Sale 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. Sanctuary
Sanctuary Worship Services 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. Sanctuary
Vacation Bible School Launch Party 12:15-5:00 p.m. SAN Wesley Hall
Mobile Loaves & Fishes (MLF) 3rd Sunday 4:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. SAN MLF Kitchen

22-25 Monday-Thursday
Vacation Bible School 9:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Sanctuary

26 Friday
Vacation Bible School Workday 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. SAN Wesley Hall

28 Sunday
Contemplative Worship Service 9:00 a.m. EDU Murchison Chapel
Sanctuary Worship Services 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. Sanctuary

14-19 Sunday-Thursday
Reach Beyond Mission Youth Trip Houston, Texas

19 Friday
Vacation Bible School Workday 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. SAN Wesley Hall

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Vacation Bible School Workday 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. SAN Wesley Hall

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28 Sunday
Contemplative Worship Service 9:00 a.m. EDU Murchison Chapel
Sanctuary Worship Services 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. Sanctuary

Eight members of First Church were among the 1500 lay and clergy delegates who attended the Rio Texas Annual Conference 2019 sessions in Corpus Christi from Wednesday-Saturday, June 5-8. They share their impressions here:

Laity Sessions by Bob Garrett
At Thursday’s laity session, delegates heard from leaders of the Rio Texas Annual Conference’s laity leadership team, lay servant ministries, and participants in the deaconess and home missioner ministry, in which lay women and laymen are called to lifetime service with various of the United Methodist Church’s ministries. Teresa Keese and Abel Vega, who were among the Rio Texas Annual Conference’s lay delegates to the 2016 General Conference and 2019 Special General Conference, reported on those two gatherings. People aspiring to be lay delegates to the General Conference in Minneapolis, MN, May 5-15, 2020, and the South Central Jurisdictional Conference in the Woodlands, July 12-16, 2020, were allowed to step to the mic and state their names, home churches, and districts. No speeches were allowed because of lack of time. Still, the brief glimpse of the candidates was useful because voting began only a few hours later.

Plenary (Business) Sessions by Sharon Doss
Bishop Robert Schnase’s presentation on demystifying clergy appointments highlighted the UMC’s unique itinerant system for appointing clergy to congregations. In the Wesleyan tradition, UM pastors are “called to be sent.” The primary purpose that drives all appointments is the mission of the church, not making a pastor happy or a congregation content but matching clergy and congregation to unreached people in the community of the church. Bishop Schnase outlined nine additional appointment principles that guide these critical decisions. John Wesley thought that the “probability of doing more good by going thither than by staying longer where we are” reflected this “called to be sent” tenet. In that spirit, we rejoice that Michael is “going thither” to do even more good at Canyon Lake and that Taylor and Cathy are “staying longer” to do even more good with us!

Special Events Sessions by Noble Doss
I particularly enjoyed two events, one for its specificity and the other for its general application. The first was the 2019 Mission Breakfast entitled “Border Stories: Acompañamiento Along the Texas-Mexico Border.” The panelists were leaders of Mission Border Hope, Eagle Pass; Methodist Border Friendship Commission, McAllen; and San Antonio Justice for Our Neighbors. They specified, through personal witness, the unimaginable need, overwhelming odds, Spirit-filled workers, amazing optimism, and achievable places for us at FUMC to become involved with our border brothers and sisters. The second was the Annual Peace and Justice Dinner featuring Bishop Karen Oliveto from the Mountain Sky Conference, including 378 congregations in Colorado, Montana, Wyoming and Idaho. Bishop Oliveto is married to Robin Ridemout, a deaconess in the UMC’s California-Nevada Conference. Her message spoke in general but with amazing passion about her dream that “we live into a beloved community…living boldly as the body of Christ…..loving so fully and completely that the neighborhoods surrounding our churches are utterly transformed by the love that spills out of our walls and into those communities.”

Teaching Sessions by Clay Daigle
Tom Berlin, author of “Reckless Love: Jesus’ Call to Love Our Neighbor” taught an abbreviated version of his “Reckless Love” Training Series during the plenary sessions of Annual Conference. Tom developed the underlying framework of his message as he began to pay more attention to what Jesus did than what Jesus said. Where did He go? With whom did He eat? What Tom discovered was a Jesus who always went to the marginalized and the less valued. Jesus’ love crossed boundaries in ways that startled his disciples and incurred disapproval from religious leaders. If we want to live like Jesus today, we must recognize and remove the boundaries we ourselves have drawn. We must intentionally expand our circles to enable new ways for God to work through us. Such connections are possible if we root all our decisions and actions in deep love. Even small things like every email. Every Facebook post. Every encounter. By emulating the boundless, and boundary-less, love of Christ, we can bring about meaningful change and realize the Kingdom of Heaven in this life.

Continued…
VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL: WAYS TO HELP
• Help by purchasing items from our Amazon wish list at fumcaustin.org/vbswishes.
• Help by doing take-home/ work-from-home VBS projects. Fun the family can enjoy inside on a hot day! You can find these projects outside EDU Room 108.
• Help by donating the following supplies (travel size except if noted otherwise) so our campers can create 200 hygiene kits for our Feed My People Breakfast guests:
  - comb - full size
  - deodorant - full size
  - gallon ziplock bags
  - hand sanitizer
  - lip balm
  - lotion
  - razor
  - shampoo
  - soap - full size
  - toothbrush
  - toothpaste

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED
Greeters and Ushers
Want to be a greeter or usher? Join our team that continues to make FUMC one of the most welcoming congregations in Austin. Serving as a greeter or usher is an excellent opportunity to meet other members, make new friends, and welcome visitors to FUMC. Your commitment would only be one Sunday a month at either 9:00 or 11:00 a.m. worship service from July-December, 2019. If you are interested, contact Richard Bettis by calling (512) 343-2361, emailing richard.bettis44@gmail.com, or texting (512) 657-7641. He will send you all of the information. Won’t you please consider joining us? We guarantee you will find it most rewarding.

Sunday School Teachers
Prayerfully consider how you can support our children and youth. We give our regular teachers the summer off, which gives parents and other members a wonderful opportunity to teach and build relationships with these young disciples. Curriculum is provided and classrooms are prepared. Caution: the more you serve, the more fun you have! Sign up at fumcaustin.org/summer.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL
For a safe and fun VBS, we need over 50 adult and youth volunteers! To sign up, you will first need to fill out a one-time profile form in our volunteer management platform at fumcaustin.org/vbs. Once submitted, you will receive a login and then you can view available jobs and signups. If you have already created your profile, you can access it at fumcaustin.org/vbsvolunteers.

CHURCH NEWS
SIGN UP FOR ALTAR FLowers
Honor someone you love and appreciate, remember a departed loved one, or celebrate special days or events in your life or the life of the church. The cost is $60 and the available dates for the next several months are July 14 and 28; August 11; and September 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29. To sign up, contact Tami Kellberg at tami@fumcaustin.org or 512-478-5684 (ext. 226).

STATEMENT FROM THE PASTORS
Over the last two months, the “Moving Forward” Task Force has developed a resolution to welcome all couples for marriage at FUMC. On Sunday, May 19, the Administrative Board unanimously recommended the resolution to the congregation for a churchwide vote.

When FUMC took on a marriage discernment process in 2017, we were hopeful that a policy change would come through the work of the Commission on the Way Forward and the called session of General Conference in February 2019; we thought it was only a matter of time, and so we supported a policy that would treat all couples equally without violating The Book of Discipline. We remained hopeful for change in the denomination; while the One Church Plan did not match our full hopes for an inclusive church, it was a significant step in the right direction that would have allowed us to proceed with the ministry of weddings for all couples.

Unfortunately, the One Church Plan failed, and the Traditional Plan passed at General Conference in February. The Traditional Plan is meant to use draconian enforcement to discourage clergy from violating church rules against same-sex marriage; instead, it has served to clarify our call to stand up for what we believe is right, even—especially—in the face of that enforcement. For the clergy at FUMC, this has been both liberating and a strong affirmation of our privilege: we serve a congregation that supports full inclusion, where we can proclaim loud and clear that God calls us to celebrate the marriages and ministries of LGBTQ people. It is incumbent on us to use our privilege to create change, even though it comes with risk. The risk to us pales in comparison to the harm that the church has inflicted upon generations of LGBTQ persons.

As we move forward, as few points of clarity: First, the passage of a resolution is the work of the congregation; not the Pastors. This resolution marks the commitment of FUMC to provide space and support for all weddings; it does not bind the Pastors to perform all weddings. Because of this, the resolution itself does not violate The Book of Discipline. If the pastors choose to allow or perform a same-sex wedding, we could face a complaint that could lead to charges. Those charges will be a result of our decision to allow/perform the wedding, not as a result of FUMC’s resolution. We understand this risk and its potential consequences, but we believe it is time to face those head-on. Finally, our greatest hope is to minister faithfully to all we serve. Any wedding we perform should be about the couple, not about the clergy. We simply intend and hope to go about our work faithfully and serve God by serving those with whom we are in ministry.

We will spend the next few weeks preparing and discerning as we make this decision together. We invite you to be a part of this process during Town Hall Meetings provided in June and at the churchwide vote on July 14.

With great love,
Pastor Taylor and Pastor Cathy

MARRIAGE EQUALITY RESOLUTION
The marriage subcommittee of the Task Force quickly found consensus on the following points, which it and the full Task Force recommend to the Administrative Board and members of First United Methodist Church of Austin:
• That First United Methodist Church of Austin affirm its commitment to treat all couples, whether opposite-sex or same-sex, seeking the blessing of marriage equally;
• That the Sanctuary and facilities of First United Methodist Church of Austin thus be available to all couples on an equal basis for weddings, regardless of the sexual orientation of the couple;
• That clergy assigned to serve First United Methodist Church of Austin retain their traditional authority to determine the fitness of any couple to enter into marriage and to discern whether to officiate any marriage; and
• That the members of First United Methodist Church of Austin affirm their intent to support any of our pastors who are sanctioned for responding to a call to officiate a marriage ceremony for a same-sex couple, including continuing to provide their then-current salaries and related benefits for the period of any suspension and to pay costs attendant to any church trial for a charge of violating The Book of Discipline by performing that marriage ceremony.

To view the full Marriage Equality Resolution visit, fumcaustin.org/marriageequality.

MARRIAGE EQUALITY RESOLUTION CHURCHWIDE VOTE
The congregation will vote on the marriage equality resolution on the right.

July 14, 12:15 p.m., Sanctuary Main Floor

FUMCAUSTIN.ORG

PRAYER
WITHIN OUR CONGREGATION
Stephanie Benold; Sandy Bowles; Gustie Fallon; Reverend Earle Lewis; Kathy Morales; Keely Nugent; Mari Perez; Jo Sanders; Weldon Wink; and Dan Wood.

Condolences
To Jan Ashmos on the death of her mother, Mildred Spencer.

Other
For our Appalachia Service Project Team serving in Harlan County, Kentucky.

BEYOND OUR CONGREGATION
Curt Ashmos’ sister, Elissa Marek; Bob Block’s friend, Tim Sullivan; Fay Brown’s sister, Jo Renee Altenburg; Tom and Kathy Calzani’s granddaughter, Maridena Freerot; Janet Camp’s sister, Nancy Willet; Karen Collier’s father; Dixie Fulp’s great-nephew, Caleb; Beth Peck Kerr; Davis King’s father, Hugh King, Sr.; Reverend Earle Lewis’ great-niece, Morgan Bost; Danielle Morgan’s grandfather, Galen Barr; Cindy Reidland’s friend, Carly; Dianne Render’s sister-in-law, Penny Burns; Eleanor Smith’s friend, Cindy Klein; Greg Trosclair’s father, George Trosclair; and Dick Young’s nephew, Jeff Young.

MARRIAGE EQUALITY RESOLUTION
Marriage Equality Resolution

Signatory Names

FUMCAUSTIN.ORG
UPCOMING EVENTS
JUNE 30, SUNDAY
Mercy & Justice 5th Sunday Presentation 10:00 a.m. SAN Wesley Hall
We welcome Judith Knotts as our speaker. Dr. Knotts is an educator, consultant, and author who has delved deep into the world of homelessness in Austin. Her book, You Are My Brother: Lessons Learned Embracing a Homeless Community, is a collection of true stories about her encounters with homeless people and the lessons she learned from them. Join us as Dr. Knotts shares her wisdom and experiences with us.

JULY 7, SUNDAY
The Bible and Progressive Christianity Begins 10:00 a.m. SAN Wesley Hall
Many progressive Christians struggle with how to read and interpret the New Testament in the face of its apparent contradictions and challenges to our modern values. In this five-week series, Dr. Brad King will lead this collection of lectures and discussions designed to promote a better understanding of the Bible’s place in progressive Christianity and to provide you with the tools and knowledge to pursue a deeper, personal relationship with these ancient texts. To view details on the topics each week, go to fumcaustin.org/bibleclass.

Second Chance VBS Volunteer Training and Luncheon 12:15-3:00 p.m. SAN Wesley Hall
If you missed the June 2 training, come to this second chance training and orientation for all adult volunteers—new and returning—for VBS 2019. Come learn everything you need to know so you are ready to serve July 21-25. We will reflect on the scripture, explain roles and expectations, get a sneak peak at the special plans our area leaders are working on, and see the changes we have made to the schedule (4 days) and kick-off party. Lunch is provided with registration at fumcaustin.org/vbs/volunteer-training.

Conversations on Racial Justice 4:30-6:00 p.m. FLC Garrison Chapel
Join us as we work together on racial justice, seeking to undo racism in ourselves and recognize systemic racism, while working for and supporting work being done to end racial oppression. This group meets on first Sundays to discuss and learn about racial oppression, issues of whiteness and racism, and other topics through videos, podcasts, and articles. Register at fumcaustin.org/conversations.

All-Church Bowling Night 5:00-7:00 p.m. Westgate Lanes, 2701 West William Cannon
Join us for a fun night of bowling! The cost is $10 per person. For questions or more information, contact Liz Kilday at liz3101@yahoo.com.

JULY 11, THURSDAY
Cheers Ministry Movie Night: The Sting 6:30 p.m. Reception and 7:30 p.m. Movie
Mark your calendars! Our Cheers Ministry, a community for those young-at-heart who are recently retired, semi-retired, or thinking about setting a date to retire, is planning a movie night at the Stateside Theater at the Paramount. The Hollywood movies of the 1970s have a very distinct style, but George Roy Hill went for something a bit more old-fashioned in this cunning caper, using ragtime music and other artistic flourishes to take us back to the Great Depression. Newman and Redford are at it again, this time plotting a big con against a wealthy mob boss. Will they pull it off? Join us to find out! Register by July 7 at fumcaustin.org/cheers.

JULY 14, SUNDAY
Retiree Recognition Sunday 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. Sanctuary
Retirement is a relatively recent phenomenon in human history. Life expectancy used to be so short that most workers didn’t quit work until they died. And without a reliable pension system, retirement was a luxury reserved for the wealthy until almost the 20th Century. Things are much different now, and retirement is widely accepted as the norm. On this Sunday, we will recognize members and visitors who have retired or plan retirement in 2019. If you would like to recognize someone, email Dick Young at rtyoung@austin.rr.com with their name, retirement date, and organization name by Sunday, July 7.

JULY 19 AND 20, FRIDAY AND SATURDAY
Vacation Bible School Workdays SAN Wesley Hall
Help us transform our Sanctuary and hallways for VBS: Marx and Beyond! We gather to paint, cut, and assemble decorations. Whether or not you consider yourself creative, we have a job for you! Friday hours are 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. and Saturday hours are 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Sign up at fumcaustin.org/vbsvolunteers.

JULY 21, SUNDAY
Vacation Bible School Launch Party 12:15-2:00 p.m. SAN Wesley Hall
Lunch and Launch! Start the Marx and Beyond adventure early with our VBS party. Come enjoy lunch and activities to get ready to GO BEYOND during a fun week of exploring God’s power. Free registration at fumcaustin.org/vbs helps us plan for fun and games.

A multi-sport camp for ages 5-12 consisting of games like capture the flag, dodgeball, kickball, and other games revolving around sports like basketball, flag football, and soccer. The cost is $55.

JULY 29- AUGUST 1
Rookies Camp 8:30-10:30 a.m. FLC
Calling all younger children 2-5 years old. Our 8-10:30 a.m. camp is a multi-sport camp for ages 2-5 that will introduce each child to fundamentals of each sport. Each day is packed with fun activities and games. Spots are limited and fill up quickly, so register at fumcaustin.org/vbs.

EVENT REGISTRATION
JULY 22-25
Vacation Bible School 9:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. SAN
Register your child(ren) and staff (if you are volunteering) today! Vacation Bible School (VBS) will be held 9:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at SAN for kids ages 6 weeks through 6th grade! The Starfish Galaxian needs our help. Children four years-completed 5th grade are invited on a journey to Mars and Beyond this summer! It is going to be an out-of-this-world adventure as we explore where God’s power can take us. The cost is $40 until the registration cut-off on July 10. Spots are limited and fill up quickly, so register at fumcaustin.org/vbs.

JULY 22-25
Post VBS Sports Camp 12:30-4:30 p.m. FLC
A multi-sport camp for ages 5-12 consisting of games like capture the flag, dodgeball, kickball, and other games revolving around sports like basketball, flag football, and soccer. The cost is $55.

JULY 29- AUGUST 1
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Calling all younger children 2-5 years old. Our 8-10:30 a.m. camp is a multi-sport camp for ages 2-5 that will introduce each child to fundamentals of each sport. Each day is packed with fun activities and games. Spots are limited and fill up quickly, so register at fumcaustin.org/vbs.

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