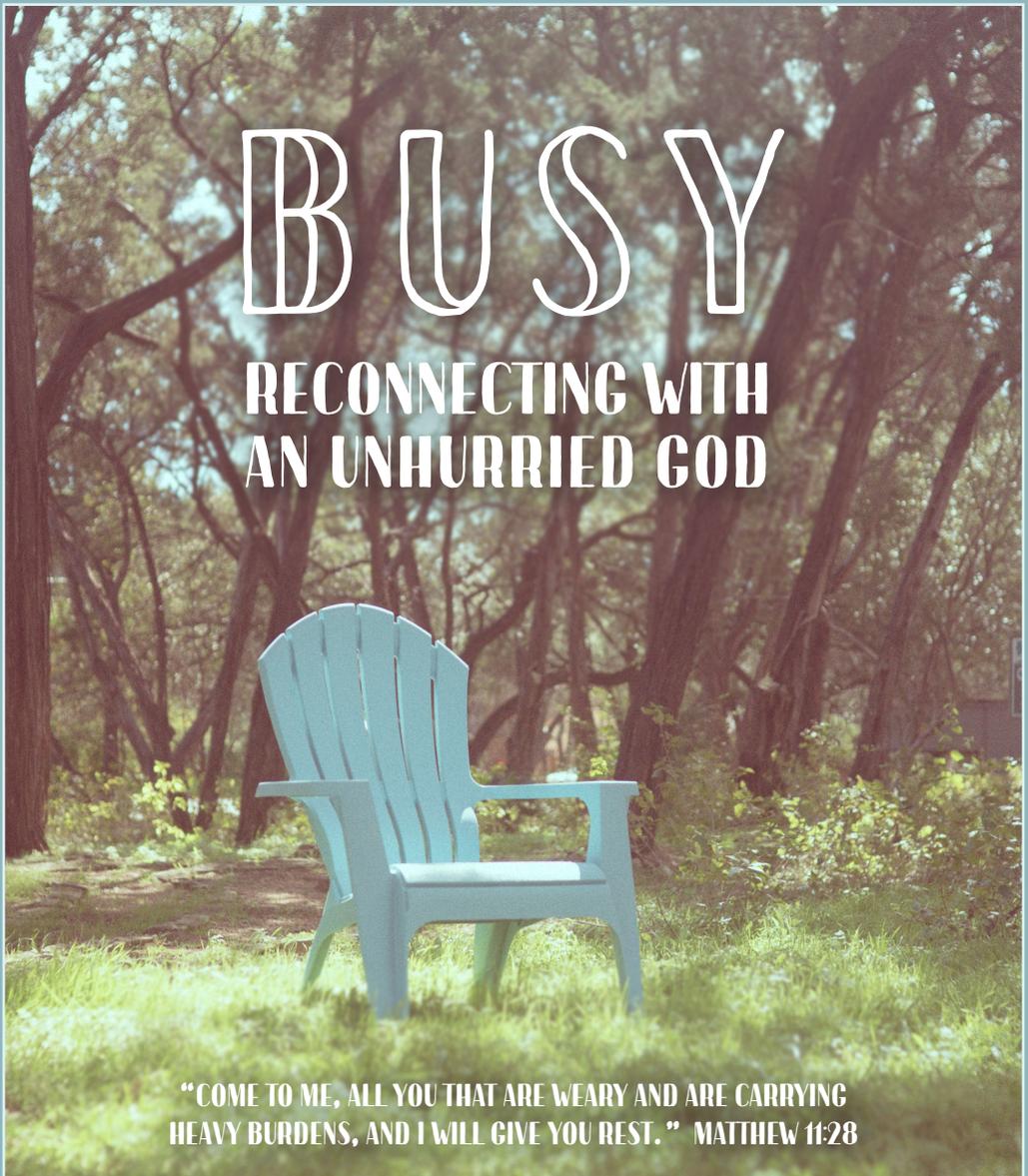


the Westlake UMC  Newsletter

## BUSY

RECONNECTING WITH  
AN UNHURRIED GOD

**“COME TO ME, ALL YOU THAT ARE WEARY AND ARE CARRYING HEAVY BURDENS, AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST.” MATTHEW 11:28**

***“I’m SO busy!”***

Has this become your mantra? You’re not alone. In today’s fast-paced culture “BUSY” has become a competitive sport. In conversation with youth in our church and, as I’ve worked together with Eanes ISD to convene community leaders in the Westlake area to learn what challenges face youth and families, the issue that consistently rises to the top of the list is “crazy-busy.” Families and individuals are experiencing high levels of stress and anxiety as a result of over-scheduling and hyper-accessibility through smart phones.

In this 21st century world many of us have come to believe, however subconsciously, that being “busy” is non-negotiable and ultimately defines our worth. We’ve forgotten that God is not a harsh taskmaster. We do not (in fact cannot) earn God’s love...or anyone else’s for that matter...by running at an ever-increasing pace or being the productivity champion.

The season of Lent (which is the six-ish weeks before Easter) has often been a time when we “give something up”—a holdover from its penitential flavor in the medieval church—as a means of more deeply focusing our lives on God. But what if we thought less about “giving up” and more about “making room?” In this Lent series, we will find out what it really costs to be so busy and will repent or “turn around” from unrealistic expectations and false beliefs so that we can be present to God.

Hear Jesus’ words, “Come to me, all you that are weary...I will give you rest.” Come...let us make room to reconnect with an unhurried God.

***Busy: Reconnecting with an Unhurried God*** begins Ash Wednesday, March 6th, with a 6 pm worship service and concludes on Easter Sunday, April 21st.

-Pastor Tracey





## Will You Be a Neighbor?

Curt Davis

“It’s a beautiful day in the neighborhood. A beautiful day for a neighbor. Would you be mine? Could you be mine?” If you recognize those words, you probably started to sing them rather than just read them. They’re lyrics from the theme song of the beloved children’s television program: Mr. Rogers Neighborhood. Fred Rogers said, “You’ve made this day a special day, just by being you. There’s no person in the whole world like you, and I like you—just the way you are.” That message influenced a generation of television-watching children to believe in and accept themselves, which caused them to be better people and better neighbors.

I think we all could use more neighbors like Fred Rogers – people who see the best in us. What if I became that kind of neighbor? What if you did too?

That got me thinking about our church. What kind of neighbors are we? When our community thinks about Westlake UMC, what comes to mind? I imagine that those who know us, have a very positive image in their minds, and that’s because of you. The church is the people, and you are its representatives.

I’ve been thinking a lot about the people in our community that we have yet to meet. We are a church that cares. We want our neighbors to hear and experience the message of Fred Rogers – that everyone is special and valuable just as they are. Guess what? That sounds like it’s rooted in the message of Jesus; and it is. I think this is something we all want to embody, but we sometimes wonder how to act in concrete ways.

What if we slowed down a bit during this season of Lent so that we would have time to look for the uniqueness and value in our neighbors and neighborhoods? What if we made room in our schedule to be neighborly – like Fred Rogers? If you’re an introvert, go on your neighborhood Facebook or Next Door page and express gratitude for something you love about your neighborhood. Or make a batch of cookies and drop it off on your neighbor’s doorstep. If you’re an extrovert, go for a walk and say hello to neighbors you don’t know very well yet (without being creepy, of course). Or offer to help with a project in a neighbor’s yard.

There is another concrete opportunity for you to slow down and make room to be neighborly and it happens on the heels of the Lent season. We are partnering with Kate Slaughter of the Lost Creek Living magazine and the Lost Creek neighborhood to provide an Easter Egg Hunt and party on Saturday, April 20 from 10am-1pm (the day before Easter). This will allow us to tangibly express our desire to be good neighbors in a really fun and engaging way. I invite you to play a little and serve a little. Check out the different volunteer opportunities that are available before, during and after the event, and sign up at [www.westlake-umc.org/events](http://www.westlake-umc.org/events). If you have a question, contact me at [cdavis@westlake-umc.org](mailto:cdavis@westlake-umc.org).

During this season of Lent, we are unhurrying and making room in our lives for the things that are most important. How will you be a neighbor?

## CONGREGATIONAL CARE MINISTRY

Mary Lou Batlan

The caring/nurturing of our church family and beyond has grown through the recent training and commissioning of Congregational Care Ministers. We continue to serve in one-to-one relationships with our Stephen Ministry program. If you or someone you know is in need of more connection to our church family, please let Mary Lou Batlan, Jo Anne Hargraves, Lori Crutchfield, or Pastor Tracey

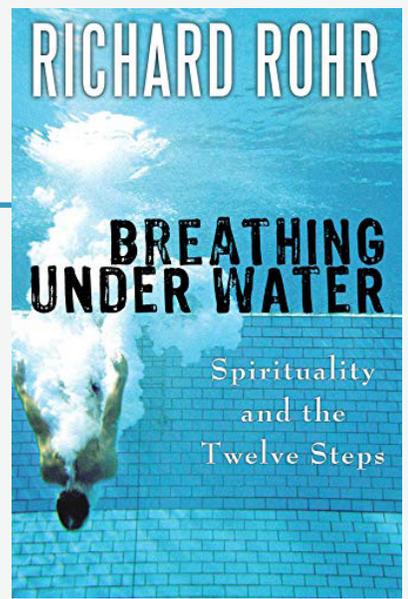
know of this concern. We will try our best to be in ministry through our caring programs with you, our church family. We are ready to care for those who suffer health issues, loneliness, loss, and more. We have recently offered our Grief/Loss Support Seminar to our church members and community friends. We will begin a Divorce Recovery Group in the Spring.

*The Twelve Step Program of Bill Wilson will go down in the history of spirituality as its most American contribution: practical, down to earth, not based in theory but in practice, insisting on an actual transformation of persons.*

~ Fr. Richard Rohr

In his book “Breathing Under Water: Spirituality and the Twelve Steps” Richard Rohr links the wisdom of the Twelve Step Program with what St. Francis called “the marrow of the Gospel.” Rohr proposes that we are all addicted in some way. Alcoholism and drug addiction are only the more obvious and highly visible forms of addiction. The primary addiction in all of us is to our own way of thinking! When we learn to identify our addiction, embrace our brokenness, and surrender to God, we begin to bring healing to ourselves and our world. Join Pastor Tracey and learn how the gospel principles in the Twelve Steps and spiritual practices like meditation and contemplation can free us from our universal addiction to our dualistic, judgmental, repetitive, and fear-based minds freeing us to embrace true life.

Fr. Richard Rohr is a Franciscan priest who is a globally recognized ecumenical teacher bearing witness to the universal awakening within Christian mysticism and is the founder and director of the Center for Action and Contemplation in Albuquerque, New Mexico. He is the author of more than twenty books.



Classes are Tuesdays during  
April and May, 6:30-8:30 pm

Please register by emailing  
Pastor Tracey  
[tbeadle@westlake-umc.org](mailto:tbeadle@westlake-umc.org)

## Take a Test Drive this Spring with WUMC Adult Ministries

Ellen Balthazar

The Adult Ministry groups at Westlake UMC invite you to reconnect with God this Lenten season by making room for growth - growth in your relationships with others and growth in your spiritual relationship with God. Whether you are already on a group roster or a new visitor to WUMC, we invite you to “test drive” connecting within an adult ministry group during the season of Lent.

Have you thought about doing small group Bible study but didn't know where to start? Try out the Sunday morning Preston Wyatt Bible Studies class (Room 403). They will be focused on passages from Matthew, Luke and Romans during Lent. Do you struggle to understand Christianity and its relationship to the headlines of the day? Pop into the Church Library for invigorating discussions based on “The Wired Word” with those in the Perspectives Class. Focusing specifically on Jesus' inspiring and revolutionary message, the

Journeys Class (Bldg. M, Room 133) will delve into a 6 week Lenten study of Mike Slaughter's “Renegade Gospel”. Check the WUMC website for details on the new studies our other Sunday morning groups, Family Foundations (Room 404-405), Parenting Tweens and Teens (Room 407), Bridges (Wyatt Hall), and the Fellowship Class (Bldg. M, Room 134), have to offer.

Also consider a test drive during Lent of our weekday options - a men's group, Band of Brothers, in the Church Library each Tuesday at 7:30am, or one of our women's groups: Abiding in the Vine, 1st and 3rd Tuesday evenings, 6:30 at Zoe's Kitchen in the Westbank Village shopping area, Heart to Heart, each Thursday at 1:30 in the Church Library or United Methodist Women at 9:30 on the 4th Tuesday of the month (Room 401).

Reconnect. Grow. Check it out. Adult ministries will help you find your home at WUMC.

Joy! For 2019, WUMC Youth are focusing on joy! Why? Well...

At the end of the year we finished our Youth Discernment process and moved into the action step of developing and implementing strategies. Our process revealed the importance of relationships in our youth. Relationships help students know who they are and what their gifts are. They help reduce stress/anxiety, and create relevance to their faith.



Just as we were looking at ways to implement actions we were selected for a grant from Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary and the Yale Center for Faith and Culture to take part in a study called "The Joy Project". We have joined a cohort with 8 other churches to implement a curriculum that focuses on joy through 12 different themes. Our High School students are taking turns each month in Sunday School

to teach one of the subjects that can bring joy and our middle school students are learning it during Sunday Youth Group. The project is perfectly timed for our youth to broaden their relationships, create relevance through student led lessons and reduce stress as we focus on finding joy. So far we have looked at joy in "Agency and Activism" and "Sexuality". A full list of the topics can be found online.

Overall, the practices and language of joy are about how we receive and give gifts from God in all of creation. We pray through this year WUMC is awakened to the joy of the gifts all around us! Here are a couple students' reflections on their experiences of joy so far:

*"Above all, standing up for what you believe in should be powered by joy, and that's what I hope the youth group got out of our Sunday School series."*  
-Ellie M.

*"Getting to speak to my peers about something I'm well versed and passionate about, made for some really interesting and insightful conversations .... I can't wait to see what the rest of the year will bring when it comes to the joy project. And I'm very excited for my peers to have the same chance to teach something they're just as passionate about."*  
-Jemima A.

## REGISTER FOR YOUTH SUMMER MISSIONS! [www.westlake-umc.org/youth](http://www.westlake-umc.org/youth)

### MIDDLE SCHOOL SAN ANTONIO

Middle School - June 23-28 to San Antonio through Blueprint Ministries! Incoming 6th through outgoing 8th graders are invited to come and serve others repairing homes.

### HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH SERVING IN CHICAGO

After many consecutive summers of repairing homes in North Carolina with ReCreation Experiences, we're heading out of the Smokey Mountains and into the city with City Service Mission! Incoming 9th through graduated 12th graders are invited to come find God in Chicago as we serve the urban poor. July 14-20 in Chicago with CSM.org



There are many traditions and practices that the Church has during Lent. The Children's Council hopes to help children understand and experience Lenten traditions better this year. We have been learning that the best way to pass on faith and the traditions of the church is through intergenerational relationships. We have planned another conversation for March 3rd, at 10:10am in the gym. During this time, we will explore the story of Jesus retreating to the desert. Why did he go? What did he do? We'll also talk about practices that people have during Lent. Some people fast, some people give something up, others take on a particular prayer regime, and still others dedicate time to serving the community. How do these help us prepare for Easter? How can we help our kids experience these positively? Our community is

not complete without your presence among us. I hope you will join us for this conversation.

This year WUMC is participating in the Methodist build for Habitat for Humanity. While young kids can't safely help build a house, we can help feed the volunteers! We plan on gathering for a cookie baking session at the end of March and then prepare and bring lunch to the build site on March 30th. Megan will be sending around details for families to sign up. All hands are welcome to help bake, prepare and bring lunch!

This year's Holy Week Walk will happen on April 14th at 10:10am. The plans for this event are still under construction but you can look forward to a wonderful community time of storytelling.



## VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

This year's VBS will happen from 9am to noon on June 10th through the 14th. This year we will travel around Greece following Paul's adventures as he helps build church communities. Registration will start at the end of March. Want to volunteer? Contact Megan!

## ARE YOU A PART OF THE GREETER TEAM? Glenda Summers

Do you remember when you walked into church for the first time? Was it a little bit uncomfortable? Do you remember what made it feel more comfortable? Most likely, it was a kind and considerate person that wanted to make sure you felt welcomed. That clearly had an impact, because you made a connection and now you're reading this article.

Our Greeter Team is our first line of friendliness at the church, but it doesn't stop there. You may not officially be on the Greeter Team, but you are a huge part of what makes this church a welcoming place. On several occasions, we have had people tell us how welcomed they

felt on their initial visits to the Westlake UMC campus. Keep up the good work!

In our worship series during the season of Lent, we will unhurry and make room for God and the most important things in our lives. As we anticipate many guests during this season and on Easter Sunday let's remember what it felt like to walk into church for the first time and be intentional about helping our guests feel at home. Greeter Team or not, you are a part of making our church a welcoming place, so consider yourself deputized as the newest members of our Welcome Committee.

## LET THEM EAT PANCAKES

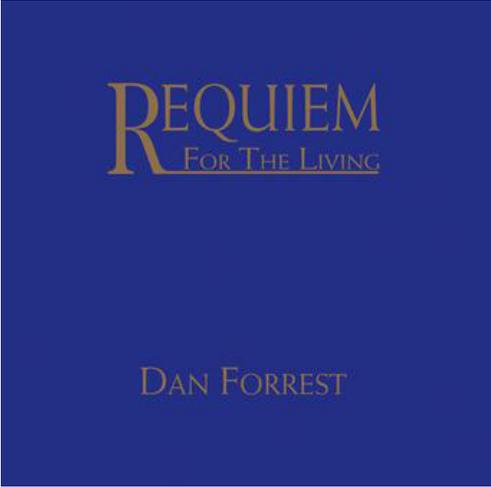
Hollis Matheny

Recently the WUMC Fellowship Committee hosted the Annual Chili Cook-Off with nine teams competing for medals and prizes. This year's concoctions featured a range of pork, chicken and beef with lots of options from beans to green chilies. The second category vegetarian/vegan chili gave tasters two delicious choices making it a close contest. Many stayed after church to line up and enjoy the feast from all of



the teams. After the votes were counted the winners were announced; Monica Bushong, Vegan and Dixie Paulos, traditional. Congratulations to our 2019 Champs!!

The Fellowship Committee will be serving up more opportunities this spring for your dining pleasure. On the Sunday before Ash Wednesday, March 3, we'll host a Pancake Lunch with all the seasonal trimmings at 12:15pm. Then on May 19, back by popular demand, Breakfast Tacos will be served 9:45-10:45am.



## REQUIEM FOR THE LIVING

DAN FORREST

I think we all agree that our busy lives require a balance of rest and play so that we are truly living life! No one ever says on their deathbeds that they wished they had spent more time in traffic or at the office, but rather they wish they had spent time with family and friends enjoying the ordinary moments of life!

This lent the Chancel choir with guest singers will be working on a very special work that speaks to this topic, "Requiem for the Living." Here is a description of the work provided by the publisher.

A Requiem, at its core, is a prayer for rest-traditionally, for the deceased. The five movements of Dan Forrest's Requiem for the Living, (2013), however, form a narrative just as much for the living, and their own struggle with pain and sorrow, as for the dead. The

opening movement sets the traditional Introit and Kyrie texts for rest and mercy- using ever-increasing elaborations on a simple three-note descending motive. The second movement, instead of the traditional Dies Irae, sets Scriptural texts that speak of the turmoil and sorrow which face humanity, while yet invoking musical and textual allusions to the Dies Irae. This movement juxtaposes aggressive rhythmic gestures with long, floating melodic lines, including quotes of the Kyrie from the first movement. The Agnus Dei is performed next (a departure from the usual liturgical order) as a plea for deliverance and peace; the Sanctus, following it, becomes a response to this redemption. The Sanctus offers three different glimpses of the "heavens and earth, full of Thy glory", all of which develop the same musical motive: an ethereal opening section inspired by images of space from the Hubble Space Telescope, a stirring middle section inspired by images of our own planet as viewed from the International Space Station, and a closing section which brings the listener down to Earth, where cities teem with the energy of humanity. The Lux Aeterna which then closes the work portrays light, peace, and rest- for both the deceased and the living.

We will be singing portions of this work during Lent and on Easter Sunday and performing the entire piece on Good Friday evening. If you are interested in joining the choir for this very special work please contact Diana at dsanchez-bushong@westlake-umc.org

## Stewardship Update

Byron Attridge

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We have officially concluded the Stewardship Campaign of the year. A HUGE THANK YOU to everyone who pledged funds to help our church in its mission to Follow Christ and Transform Lives in our community!

Pledging is a critical step of faith along a deepening spiritual journey and is essential to the process of achieving a clear picture of the resources we have available to carry out our mission and ministry. If you have pledged, we are deeply thankful! If you have not, please help us by doing so, even if it is to let us know that you are unable to give funds this year. We understand that everyone will not always be able to pledge funds, and we are equally

grateful for commitments of time, talents, and other resources.

We would also like to thank the Outgoing Committee Chairman, Tim Schelhammer and committee member Clint Schroff for their outstanding leadership and service, as well as, Cara Fox and Bobbie Joe Cornelius for committing their time and talents for 2019.

On behalf of the Stewardship Committee and our entire Church Community, we are eternally grateful for everyone's contributions to the ministry. May you bask in the warmth of the blessings that Christ has given us in 2019!

On December 30th, Pastor Tracey led us in "Sacred Doing" and the music team reminded us that "we are each other's angels". During the service, we were invited to help prepare Dignity Bags for asylum seekers at the Texas border and Manna Bags to give to the homeless brothers and sisters we meet on our streets. Thanks to the generosity of the WUMC community, these essential supplies were purchased by the Outreach Steering Committee. Through

our Sacred Doing service, 75 Manna Bags were prepared for the homeless we meet here. A total of 216 Dignity Bags were delivered to Good Neighbor Settlement Home (GNSH) in Brownsville, TX. Founded in 1953 by five women from a United Methodist Church women's group, GNSH is currently serving asylum seekers who are released by ICE in Brownsville. What a wonderful way for us to show that we truly are "each other's angels"!



## THE CENTRAL TEXAS FOOD BANK

Richard Edmonson

Christ calls us to be servants and there are many opportunities to be a servant here in Central Texas. One of those opportunities is the Central Texas Food Bank. On January 31st seven members of WUMC choir joined organizations from the University of Texas and other groups from the Austin area in bagging grapefruit for distribution by the Food Bank in Central Texas. As the Central Texas Food Bank is the recipient of the money to be raised in this year's version of "That's Amore" it seemed fitting to volunteer at the Food Bank to learn more about its operations. The volunteers bagged in excess of 12,000 pounds of grapefruit during a 2 hour period.

The bags of grapefruit were then placed on pallets and transported to the warehouse for later loading on trucks for transport to their ultimate points of distribution to those in need. The seven volunteers from WUMC were Diana Sanchez-Bushong, Robert and Peggy Davis, Charlene Ingram, Terri Cravey, Lydia Hewett, and Richard Edmonson.

The Central Texas Food Bank has been in existence for close to 35 years and serves 21 counties in Central Texas. During 2018 the Central Texas Food Bank provided over 45 million meals to those in need in Central Texas.

## WUMP ENROLLMENT

Laura Clemens

Westlake United Methodist Preschool is now enrolling for the 2019-20 school year. Church member families do have priority, but spaces are limited. This year we will be offering classes 5 days a week for ages 2-5.

Please contact Director Laura Clemens at 512-327-1337 or [lclemens@westlake-umc.org](mailto:lclemens@westlake-umc.org) for information about our program or to schedule a tour. More information is available at the school's website, [westlakepreschool.org](http://westlakepreschool.org)

The Preschool will also be offering a Summer Program. Dates and registration information will be on our website beginning in March. We'd love to have you join us.

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## MO JOY ALL CHURCH RETREAT May 10-12 | Mo Ranch

Spring is almost here, which means it is time to make room in your calendars for the 2019 WUMC All Church Retreat! This year's theme is "Mo-Joy!" Reserve your spot for May 10-12, at Mo Ranch by registering at [www.westlake-umc.org](http://www.westlake-umc.org).

This exciting tradition began five years ago as an enjoyable way for our church family to make new friends and deepen existing relationships. Away from daily distractions, everyone is able to experience a weekend focused on fun and relaxation in the beautiful, hill country setting at Mo Ranch.

On Friday night we'll eat dinner together and sing around the campfire. Saturday morning after breakfast we'll gather for an informational program and then play the rest of the day!

As in years past, we have lined up what we believe is a meaningful program for the youth and adults that we hope you will find relevant and enjoyable. During the program we have wonderful, experienced childcare set up for the children. Infants and toddlers will be in a safe, entertaining and age-appropriate area. Elementary aged children will be in a spacious area that accommodates indoor and outdoor

fun. There will be planned activities and opportunities to play with each other.

The list of outside activities to enjoy include: canoeing, fishing, 38' water slide, swimming, hiking, children's playground, kickball, ping pong, ropes course, prayer tank and labyrinth. Or, if you prefer you can enjoy activities inside like: puzzles, board games, card games, arts and crafts, reading, cooking, charades, napping and singing.

Delicious, healthy meals are provided and served family style in the strikingly unique Guest Lodge. When everyone gathers to share meals, there is a genuine feeling of community created.

A detailed schedule will be emailed later in the year to those who have registered with directions and information on what to bring. We have contracted with Mo Ranch for a specific number of spaces and in the past we have filled up quickly. Come make some happy memories with us at Mo Ranch May 10-12, 2019.

