

JOURNEY TO DAMASCUS

September Newsletter

Message from the Board

Greetings to you my Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

As we come into the Fall, with the leaves beginning to let go from their branches and cooler weather entering our community after a seemingly long hot summer, I hope that each of you can feel a sense of refreshment and can begin a renewal of Spirit.

Our world has gone through many changes since the beginning of the year – a Global Pandemic with COVID-19, racial injustice, looming hurricanes & tropical storms to our Coastal Bend area, the Wildfires in the West, and the turbulent political climate & the upcoming Presidential election.

Looking back and looking forward, there are more events and circumstances that many of us have never had to face, particularly all at the same time.

- **COVID-19** has brought a lot of heartbreak to our community and families through the loss of loved ones from the virus, as well as from suicides in the midst of isolation during this pandemic.
- The **Racial Injustice** in this country needs to finally be resolved, but we need to pray for a more peaceful path to a resolution.
- The **Hurricanes and Tropical Storms** are common to all of us, but preparing for their landfall can seem a bit overwhelming during the other circumstances already going on.
- The **Wildfires** in the western US are destroying forests, homes, businesses and entire communities – where are these people going to go?
- The **Presidential Election**.....

As a strong Christian community of believers in Almighty God, I am thankful that we have each other to “get us through” these challenging times. The bond of this community reminds me of the Red Wood Trees in California that were discussed in the Augustine Institute’s Episode 7 of “The Search” entitled “Why a Church?” In this episode, it talks about how Red Wood Trees grow very close to one another, they grow very tall, their root system does not extend very deep below the ground

SAVE THE DATES!

All of the weekends have been moved to 2021 and these are the dates we have scheduled with Pax Christi:

2021 Weekends

**Corpus Christi
Men's
March 4 - 7**

**Corpus Christi
Women's
April 22 - 25**

**Corpus Christi
Men's
June 17 - 20**

**Corpus Christi
Women's
July 22 - 25**

**Corpus Christi
Men's
September 16 - 19**

surface, but spread out horizontally very close to the ground surface. Each tree's root system actually weaves through the root system of the other trees creating a very strong matted bond. How these Redwood Trees grow and survive (without wildfires of course) is because of how they grow their foundation together, much like our community. Like the Redwoods, a single tree could not stand on its own because it's root system is so shallow, but growing together with the other trees, they are very strong working together. These trees are just like our community and our churches; we need each other to remain strong and vigilant in such trying times.

While there seems to be a "light at the end of the tunnel" with the COVID-19 Pandemic, we are "not out of the woods yet." We still need to maintain social distancing and utilizing appropriate personal protective equipment, including masks, sanitizers, etc. where possible to maintain our safety until a vaccine or other medications become available. As such, there is no new information from the Diocese of Corpus Christi or Pax Christi at this time, but understand that your Board of Directors will provide new information to as soon as it becomes available.

May we all continue to be here for each other, pray for each other, help each other where we can, and above all be the hands, feet, and voice of Christ to our world!

Until next month, Stay Safe.

De Colores!

Board of Directors - JTD Corpus Christi

Paul Pilarczyk

Board of Directors - JTD Corpus Christi

J2damascus@yahoo.com

General mailbox for JTD Board of Directors

Website & Pilgrim/Team Applications

The links for online applications are updated!!! The Website is still under construction, but the current Website is still active! Let's go Fishing!

Help

Help:

Do you or your reunion group need some help setting up a virtual meeting for your reunion group or do you need help finding a group to join?

Please feel free to email J2damascus@yahoo.com (General mailbox for JTD Board of Directors) and one of the board members will be happy to reach out to you and get you the help you need. Please be sure to include a phone number that we can reach you at and a time you are available.

Corpus Christi
Women's
October 21 - 24

2021 Weekends
JTD - Austin

Check back for more
information!

Updates from the Lay Directors

Rick Olivera

JTD #203

I have not made a decision on the scripture for the weekend, because I am torn between two of them. We had one St. Elsewhere meeting back in March and that has been all the communication we have had as a team. I will be starting up communication with the team next month as we start to get ready to do God's work next September. Agape and Prayer lists have not been addressed as we are still out a year before the weekend. We plan on starting our meetings on or about the middle of March 2021.

De Colores,
Rick Olivera

Reunion Groups

Blessings to you - our Brothers and Sisters in Christ. We pray that you are well and staying safe.

COVID-19 has definitely changed all of our lives in many ways. From the beginning, as we began to shelter in place and work from home, and even attend church via livestream, the more isolated from each other we became. We know this helps to stop the spread of the virus and this was/is a good thing. But for being able to remain in touch with each other and combat loneliness, isolation can be tough.

The Tuesday Night Angels Reunion Group began meeting on Zoom. We are a diverse group of women with many different professions. However, no matter the profession or family dynamics we all have felt the impact of this isolation, and felt we needed to be better in touch and thus, support each other in our prayers, thoughts, and words. Thus, it was that our virtual reunion group meetings began.

Even though isolated, life brought many needs for praying and sharing. Meeting together through Zoom, we could carry on our Reunion Group in spite of not being able to physically be together. The support and love as well as a chance to share in prayer together has proven to be beneficial in this time of isolation. During these months that we have been meeting virtually, some members have had major lifechanging experiences. There have been graduations, illness to parents and family members, as well as friends and co-workers who have asked for prayers. Sadly, the group has experienced the death of parents, friends, and co-workers whose loved ones left behind needed our support.

As we have journeyed together virtually, these meetings continue to help us grow closer as a group, keeping us accountable to one another, and all "Counting on Christ". If your reunion group hasn't met together during the Covid pandemic, please consider trying the virtual platform. It helps the feeling of isolation be a little less impactful, and we all know "Christ is Counting on us" to keep Faith, Hope and Love alive in these days ahead.

De Colores



Contact Us

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Some Words from the Wise

Brought to you this month by Rev. Gwen Jennings

Will you join me, please, in one of my favorite prayers? "Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created, and you shall renew the face of the earth. O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy your consolations. Through Christ our Lord. Amen."

De Colores, Journey friends! Aren't you glad we went on our Journey before all this COVID mess got started? I sure am! It seems our world has been turned upside down and inside out but, as Christians, especially as Journey and Walk Christians, we have what we need to journey with peace. I pray you are utilizing your gifts for growth and comfort and not allowing anything to derail your process.

When we first started the distancing thing I knew it could be a long process because of the experiences of other countries. However, I believed the US would find a cure relatively quickly. I am just arrogant enough to believe Americans can do anything we set our minds to. But as the days turned into months the arrogance became fear. With my age and health conditions I was warned of my vulnerability. I worried for my family and friends. Soon, I watched as lifelong friends passed to their great reward. I saw dear friends lose family members. And this disease, this pandemic, became very real.

These past few months my emotions have run the gamut. There is the isolation and loneliness, sadness and depression, fear and anger. I had every tool I needed at my fingertips but I chose to wallow in self-pity. I looked at my life and had to make a decision. Was I going to lose a year or two of my life and my joy because a pandemic kept me from socializing? The pandemic kept me from performing a lot of ministries I found rewarding, however, there were so many things I could do to improve my life if I would simply take a step in the right direction.

Everything we've learned in the Journeys and the Walks can be put in the practice whether we are part of a physical face-to-face gathering, a virtual gathering or sitting on the couch reading scripture. I agree it's easier to feel the presence of God when we are gathered together. Matthew 18:20 does tell us "where two or more gather in my name, there I am with them." However, Christ also tells us he will be with us ALWAYS. Matthew 28:20 "...and lo, I am with you always, even to the very end of the age." So when I was sitting on the couch feeling sorry for myself Christ was there waiting patiently. Just as he has been present through my entire life, through every challenge I faced, he STILL was present. We have every right to feel sorry for ourselves on occasion, but we don't need to live there. Have you read your Bible today? Studied or read devotionals? Called a friend to offer support or encouragement? Did you sing or listen to a hymn? Talk to God? There are so many ways to stay close to God. Look at ways you can help further God's kingdom by sharing love in your world. Small steps can make big differences! If you find yourself unable to get out of the funk, please reach out for help. It is nothing to be ashamed of and we have all been there at one time or another. Call your priest or pastor, your reunion group friend, your table leader. You can call me or another clergy you felt a connection to. Often when I feel stressed or depressed I say that opening prayer asking God's presence. It isn't just for a talk or a reunion group.

This prayer can bring us much needed peace. Remember it. Repeat it. Reflect on it.

Lastly, take the time each and every day to count your blessings. When I take them to count my blessings it is impossible to wallow in self pity for I AM BLESSED. YOU ARE BLESSED. Despite COVID, despite distancing and isolation WE ARE BLESSED! So let's close today with another prayer we are all familiar with.

"Almighty God, who lives and reigns forever, we give you thanks for all the gifts you have bestowed upon us. Through Christ our Lord, Amen

Blessings, Rev Gwen

Agape Appeal

GOAL

Due to an increase in food and lodging costs over the last few years, the Annual Agape Appeal will be used to off-set these increased expenses for the Team and Pilgrims.

The Annual Agape Appeal's goal is to:

- Never turn anyone away by making the weekend affordable for **ALL**.
- Provide a sustainable, annual fund to insure the continuation of JTD for **ALL**.

The intent of this appeal is to assist those who need monetary support in order to attend this Christian weekend. No one should be turned away due to financial need.

By joining our resources, we can insure JTD's continuation for friends, family and strangers.

AGAPE DONATION

Suggested donations:

- \$5.00 each month
- \$60.00 Annually
- \$30.00 Semi-annually
- \$15.00 Quarterly
- \$100.00 Husband and wife

Or... Whatever you can GIVE

It's not about how **MUCH** each one can give.

It's about how **MANY** will give.

Only \$5.00 a month folks!

UNITY

With God all things are possible.
And by uniting together, we can change the world!

Please sign up for the JTD News Letter at:
www.journeytodamascus.org
All the information on how to send your Annual Agape Appeal will be available.

Please make checks Payable to Journey to Damascus and write **JTD Appeal** in note section of check. Please include your name, address, email address and phone number.

You may send it to **JTD Appeal**, P.O. Box 948, Corpus Christi, TX 78403.

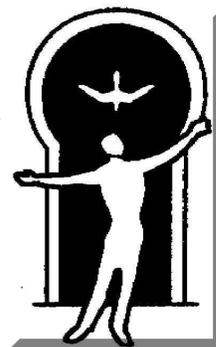
Please help spread this opportunity by word of mouth or social media to encourage **all** the JTD community members to participate in this appeal.

De Colores

[Click here to view the PDF version of Annual Agape Appeal](#)

Sr. Angela Murdaugh Scholarship Fund

We are also very pleased to announce the establishment of the Sister Angela Murdaugh Scholarship Fund. The goal is to be able to pay the weekend fee for one pilgrim per JTD weekend from this scholarship. To raise money to fund this endeavor we are selling JTD car emblems. The cost of the emblems is \$10. If you would like to order emblems for yourself, as gifts for your Reunion group please contact Dale Hernandez at dale_hernandez@yahoo.com.



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