

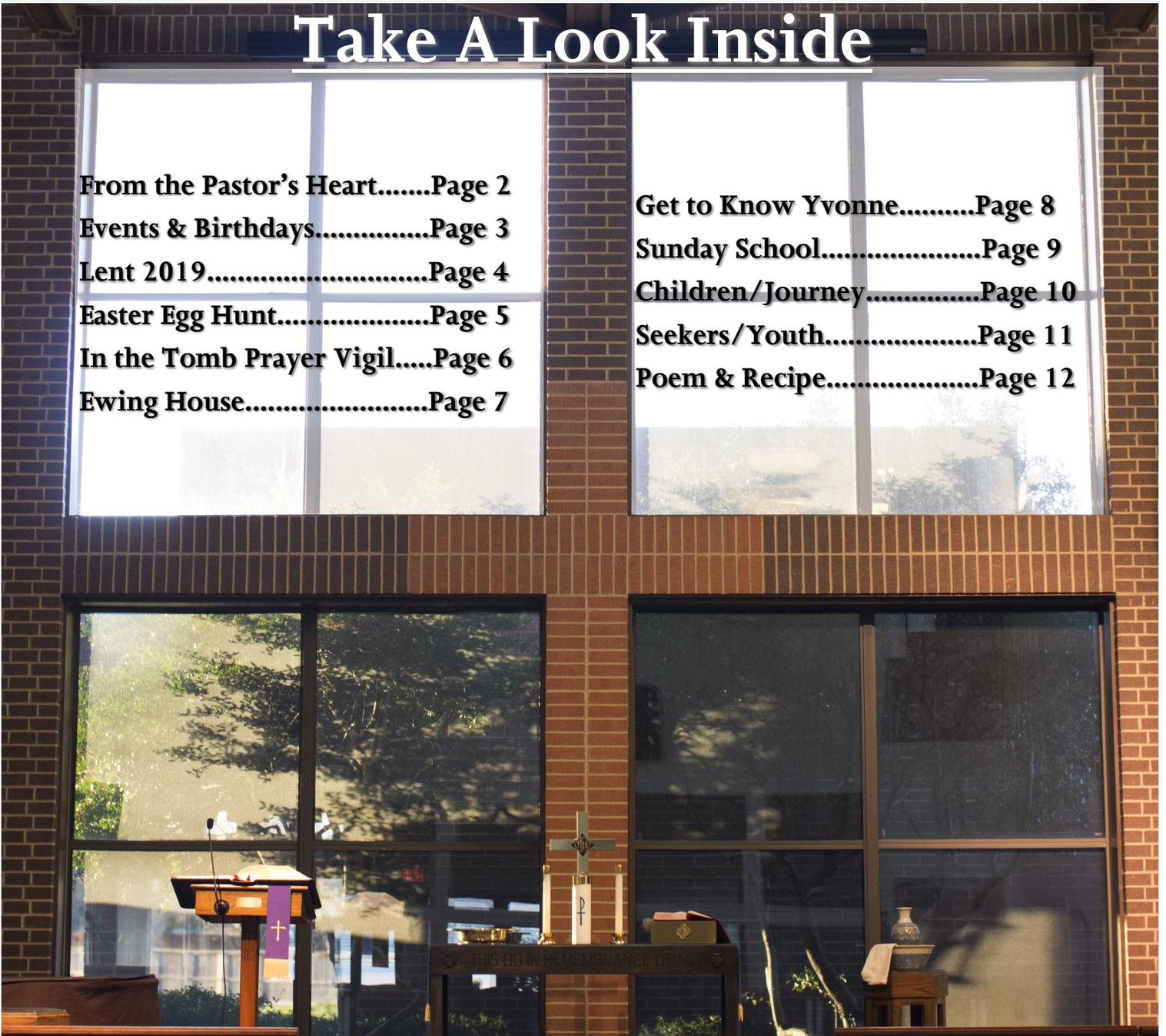
April 2019

# *the* **New Covenant** *Window*

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*Sharing God through love and service*

## My Favorite Time of Year



Have you ever been asked what is your favorite holiday or time of year? While the season of the year chosen vary greatly, many, many would say that Christmas is their favorite holiday. After all, who doesn't love the decorations and lights, smiling and excited children, trees, presents, Santa Claus, parties galore. It's a fun-filled time of year. And from a Christian perspective, who doesn't get a warm fuzzy over the birth of a baby...especially the baby Jesus? Yet as much as I love Advent and Christmas, they are not my favorite.

When Andy and I first got married, 4<sup>th</sup> of July was his favorite. It was during the summer and a family time with fireworks, bar-be-que with all the trimmings and I contributed peach cobbler to the tradition. We still try to keep 4<sup>th</sup> of July traditions going and this last year Naomi and Anna made the cobbler. Although the food is a bit of work, it is a far more relaxed holiday in our house than Christmas with all of the decorating, shopping, church events, and finally collapse on Christmas Day. Yet as much as I love 4<sup>th</sup> of July, it's not my favorite either.

For some people, Thanksgiving is a favorite. Oh my, the food, oh my! Turkey, my mom's dressing and corn casserole, cranberry sauce, fruit salad, the green varies by who's at the table each year...it's a day of trying to get everyone's favorite on the table. Don't forget the pies...pumpkin and pecan are standard at my house. And turkey soup, among other things, made with leftovers. Before you lecture me on the meaning of Thanksgiving, I know, I know. But it's really about the food for me. Yet as much as I love Thanksgiving, it's also not my favorite.

You know where I'm going with this. After all, we are in Lent and fast approaching Easter. For me, Lent is a time for reflection and self-examination. It is a time for being truthful with myself and with God about who I am and what I have done or left undone. It's a time for dropping all pretense about who we are and what drives us. It's a time for stretching and not always comfortable. Yet I love Lent because of how it prepares me for Easter. Without it, Easter would be about bunnies, baskets filled with candy, egg hunts, and flower covered crosses. For me, Lent saves Easter, makes Easter about resurrection and new life.

Ten years ago, my father died on Palm Sunday. His memorial service was on Good Friday and he celebrated his first Easter in the fullness of new life. Some might wonder if his loss might make Lent, Holy Week, and Easter painful and my least favorite holiday. Yet loss and grief made it all more poignant and more meaningful to me. I celebrate out of a place in my soul that no other holiday can reach. I see and experience the events of these days in a different light.

On Palm Sunday, I always remember that day 10 years ago while I remember that Jesus knows the journey on which he embarks. On Maundy Thursday, I remember the sermon I preached 10 years ago of Jesus being on hospice but he was the only one who knew it. On Good Friday, I remember my dad's service and the Good Friday Tenebrae service where I was a reader...embraced by a church that allowed me to read while having a backup in case I couldn't speak. And on Easter morning, I celebrate resurrection...oh eternal life...oh grace of God given to all. So you see, Easter cannot be Easter without Holy Week.

I'm sure you have guessed. Lent, Holy Week, and Easter are my favorite. I hope you will walk through these days with me as we walk together with our Lord. Let's not miss a single moment. As a culture we often try to avoid pain at all costs. Yet without pain we cannot know complete joy. Jesus wants our joy to be complete. So stay the course with me: in outreach to our community with an Egg Hunt on April 13<sup>th</sup>, Palm Sunday worship, Maundy Thursday led by our youth, Good Friday Tenebrae (I love reading this service!), In the Tomb Prayer Chain, and of course, Easter morning when we rejoice in "Christ the Lord is risen today!"

Blessings,  
*Pastor Dana*

## Mark Your Calendar

- April 13:** All Church Clean-Up  
Community Egg Hunt
- April 14:** Palm Sunday
- April 18:** Maundy Thursday Youth Play
- April 19:** Tenebrae Service
- April 19-21:** In the Tomb Prayer Chain
- April 21:** Easter Sunday  
NCUMC Easter Egg Hunt
- April 22-26:** Church Offices Closed

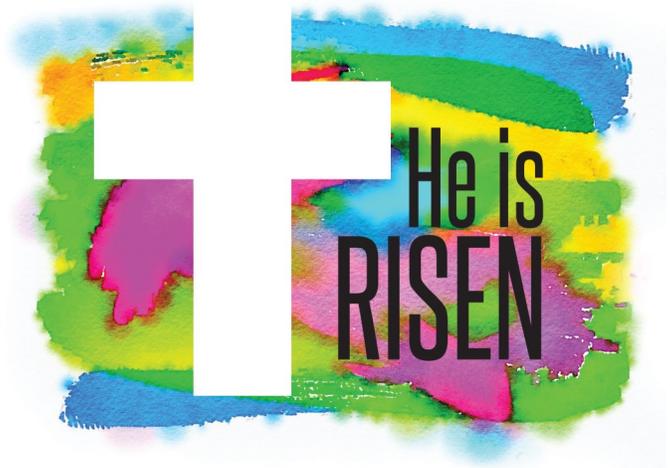


**TAX DAY**  
**April 15**



**APRIL**  
**BIRTHDAYS**

- 4:** Bryan Bolger
- 13:** Molly May
- 14:** Linda Dunn
- 20:** Hannah Browning  
Carol Duke
- 29:** Kathy Rogers
- 30:** David Montemayor



## *Pray It Forward!*

Come join us to pray for Our Church, Our Community, Our World, and those who need others to pray for them in their life struggles.

When: Wednesday  
Time: Weekly @ 5:45 pm  
Place: Hallowed Grounds

Matthew 18:20

*"For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."*

## Lent 2019

### *Weekly Sunday Lenten Series*

The Gifts of the Dark Wood by Eric Elnes

There will be a unique communion opportunity each week.

*Palm Sunday* – April 14, 8:30 am / 11:00 am

*Maundy Thursday* – April 18, 6:00 pm in the Sanctuary  
Led by our Youth/Children

*Tenebrae* – Friday, April 19, 7:00 pm

A musical service filled with anthems and congregational hymns,  
woven through the story of Christ.

### *In the Tomb Prayer Chain*

A continuous prayer vigil beginning Friday, April 19 following the  
Tenebrae Service and ending Easter Sunday, April 21 @ 6:00 am

*Easter* – April 21, 8:30 am / 11:00 am

**He is Risen!!**

Please join us on  
Saturday, April 13, 2019 from 1:00pm-3:00pm  
for a Community Easter Egg Hunt!

The hunt will begin at 2:00 pm. The afternoon will be filled with hot dogs, games, prizes, music, and fun for the whole family. Everyone is invited!

New Covenant is hosting the event located at  
Town Center Park Pavilion  
356 Tripp Road  
Sunnyvale, Texas 75182

If you would like to donate plastic eggs and candy (no chocolate please), we would greatly appreciate it. These can be dropped off at the church. If you would like to volunteer your talents and help us, we would love to have you. For further information, please contact Kerri Embrey. (kerriembrey67@gmail.com or 469-877-7221)

# Happy Easter!



## In the Tomb Prayer Chain

By Cindy Wolfe and the Pray It Forward Team

New Covenant family, we are halfway through our Lenten journey to the cross. We have traveled through the Dark Wood and contemplated Uncertainty, Emptiness, Being Thunderstruck and Getting Lost. We will experience Temptation, Disappearing and The Gift of Misfits before we reach the cross.

*Holy Saturday is the day in the Christian liturgical calendar that celebrates the 40-hour-long vigil that the followers of Jesus Christ held after his death and burial on Good Friday and before his resurrection on Easter Sunday. Holy Saturday is the last day of Lent and of Holy Week, and the third day of the Easter Triduum, the three high holidays before Easter, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday.<sup>1</sup>*

This season following our Tenebrae service on Friday, April 19 through Easter Sunday at 6:00 AM, we will hold a prayer vigil. This prayer vigil will take us through that dark time that is Holy Saturday.

We will form a continual chain of prayer. Each person praying for one hour and then passing the baton, per se, to the next member on the list by calling them when their hour begins. On Friday evening and Saturday morning, the sanctuary will be available for those that want to kneel at the prayer rail. Otherwise, you will pray from home to keep our chain of prayer unbroken.

This is a time for our church to pray together for God's will, plan and purpose for New Covenant UMC to be carried out in us.

**\*\*Sign-up sheet located on the bulletin board in the education wing\*\***

<sup>1</sup><https://www.thoughtco.com/holy-saturday-54156>

## Ewing House

By Kathleen Skelton

New Covenant was approached by *Aids Services of Dallas*, soliciting churches, clubs and individuals to help with serving meals to any one of four buildings. We met with the volunteer coordinator and decided that *Ewing House* could be a manageable group for us. Only 25 residents and PCAs were housed there. The unit houses acute care residents. The request was approved by our pastor and taken to the church council for approval. We began serving the residents April, 2000.

It was a learning process for us because we did not know what kind of food the residents liked, how much food to take, what utensils were needed, how many volunteers were needed to serve, etc. We had to learn the safety and health rules to protect residents from bacteria-related illness. We learned the need to respect the residents' anonymity. We could take pictures on approval for our missions bulletin board; no pictures posted on social media.

In years past there had been problems with churches serving and their form of witnessing to the residents; so ASD stopped churches from unsolicited witnessing. We share our witness with love, care and friendship. We can share our faith with any resident if the resident initiates the conversation and they do. We had one of the residents to ask why our church has served them for over 18 years and we told him it was because our church strongly supports missions and that we love them because Jesus lives in us. We respect the residents and they respect us.

NCUMC is one of the *Supper Clubs* and we serve dinner every third Wednesday of the month. The three adult Sunday school classes and individuals prepare or purchase the meals we serve. NCUMC is one of their favorite groups that serve and that is because we dine with the residents and serve their favorite foods (we have learned this over the years). We share smiles and love with the residents and in turn they share their love and smiles with us.

Anyone interested in assisting is more than welcome.  
Contact Kathleen Skelton 214-532-6128.



## Getting to Know Yvonne

By Jim Handy



When do we see God's hand operating in the daily world of people? When is a coincidence not really a coincidence but rather a tangible part of His plan? When is an event actually a signpost? And what sort of eyes does it take to discern the difference?

M. Yvonne Taylor, a second-year student at TCU's Brite Divinity School in Fort Worth, received an out-of-the-blue phone call on a Tuesday morning from the pastor of a Methodist church all the way over in Sunnyvale, Texas, inquiring about her interest in a part-time job.

A leading *pastor* calling, rather than the usual assistant? On the farthest side of the *Metroplex*? A part-time position entitled **Director of Student Ministries**? She had not even sent out her resume in over a year! Somewhat of an unconventional approach, yes? Must be a God thing, she thought. *"I never know what God has in store, but I felt Him at work."*

Since answering yes to Pastor Dana's offer, Yvonne has been diligently putting together programs and activities that involve our young folks with God's Word and works. Along with outstanding help from Laura May, Carol Duke and others, the kids have presented a play (*"Wow"*), youth have warmly sung for residents of Waterford, and a Maundy Thursday presentation is underway. An actual "Children's Church" - with opening prayers, scripture readings, sermons, hymns... a full service - has now become a Sunday staple. The 2019 Confirmation Class is going full throttle, and several community projects are also in the works.

Professional education? Yvonne has a bachelor's degree in social work, a master's in counseling, and is close to completing her master of divinity. She has worked as a special education teacher (*"a job I loved tremendously"*), a gospel radio station personality (*"where I discovered the healing power of music"*), spent five years in the Army, and served in ministry for the homeless, those in prison, and the mental hospitals. *"Through it all, I see myself as the one being blessed."*

*"Doors just started opening for me,"* she continued, referring again to God's hand in her life. And she has been successfully going through each of them.

She loves where God has led her so far, and is excited about the work she is and will be doing with New Covenant. Our one hour conversation led me to conclude that Yvonne is a person with integrity, valuable experience, empathy and lots of love for people. Her faith is deep and contagious; her work ethic is solid. I have confidence she'll get the job done well.

She quoted the Lord, who told her, *"In a church, the older folks constitute the brain...its wisdom. The middle-aged folks are the legs that get the work done. But the children...the youth: They make up the church's heartbeat!"*





The Sunday school class time at New Covenant – 9:45-10:45 – is a very engaging time. Not only does it involve the opportunity to explore biblical and spiritual concepts in more detail, it provides us with a human bonding agent that often lasts a lifetime. The classes instill a connection to our church and each other that deepens our understanding and lifts our joy at simply being here. It's more than just an addendum to our worship service experience. As you will see from the short descriptions of all five classes, each has an interactive and self-governed protocol that allows us access to the beauty of diversity, of empathy, and of honest expression.

One of God's most potent and treasured gifts to us is our capacity for friendship / fellowship / love. Sunday school participation can channel the power to bring God and every one of us closer together.

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## Celebration Sunday School

by Jim Handy

*Celebration* is the name of one of the three adult Sunday school classes at New Covenant UMC. Its moniker was established since long before I began attending the class in 1987, so I can only guess at how its originators came by that name. It may have something to do with the fact that the individuals who attend tend to have a consistently joyful approach toward the many gifts that God provides us. It is not unusual for laughter and gratitude to result from group discussions on the various topics studied by *Celebration* students.

As is the case with the other Sunday school classes, and within the church congregation as a whole, points of view can be quite varied, and we operate under the mutual avowal that "we agree to disagree in love" when opinions differ. We've found that practicing such respect for each other's opinions provides a level of comfort in sharing ideas, and adds richness and diversity to the learning process.

*Celebration* is presently going through books of the New Testament – most recently *Romans* and the *Thessalonian* series. The topics and sources used are decided by the students, and those who lead the lessons are simply shared among individuals who enjoy doing so.

New voices and minds are always enthusiastically welcome. Please join us in celebrating the experience of being alive.

## Children's Sunday School

By Carol Duke



The children's Sunday school class includes all the children K-6<sup>th</sup> grade.

We use the *Deep Blue* curriculum published by *Cokesbury*. Beginning in September, this year's theme is "At Home with God". The Bible stories have focused on many different configurations of families in the Bible. Each lesson includes a short animated DVD depiction of the story with an introduction and conclusion from an animated modern family. We talk about how today's families relate to God and that each of us belongs to God's family.

We usually start the lesson with some conversation: understanding of words they will encounter during the lesson, what in their lives is like the story. The older children may locate the lesson in the Bible and read it orally or silently. We also read aloud from story sheets that include the story for the day as well as other interesting related information. The class especially enjoys reading a play version of the story. We sometimes color, make something, or play a game

Because I like the children to learn about the customs of our church, our classroom includes a worship table covered in the color the church season. On it is a cross, a white Christ candle, and a prayer jar. The children are invited to place a stone in the jar when they offer a prayer of joy or concern. We end each lesson holding hands in a prayer circle.

In the many years I've been teaching this class, I never tire of planting such seeds in the children's fertile experiences. My prayer is always that each of them will have that "Aha!" feeling when they begin noticing things – in worship and in other parts of life – and say to themselves, "*Hey, I know about that; I remember that from Sunday school!*"

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## The Journey Sunday School

By Karen Crownover

The *Journey* adult Sunday school class, or "the class under the stairs", is such a great class! We have about 12 faithful members that show up ALMOST weekly to pray, study, and fellowship. To spice things up, there is a fair amount of healthy debate in the class and no one ever falls asleep. We typically follow a printed curriculum that is in booklet form so everyone reads and prepares for the class a week in advance. We do not have a "teacher" in the classic sense of the word as we frequently alternate leadership to provide different perspectives. The leadership is decided a week in advance. The format is scripturally based with commentary and lots of discussion. The lesson always brings us to the point of not just historical understanding but includes contemporary applications. Everyone's opinion is sought and respected. This is not a class for you if you want everyone to agree with you every week, but it is the class for you if you want to leave Sunday school with something to think about. We love visitors. We love each other. Come and visit anytime.

## The Seeker's Sunday School

By Marcia Matus

Biblical study (no experience needed) & its application to living life. All ages of adults will enjoy this class. All experiences are welcomed. *The Seekers* class has always agreed to disagree in love. We are currently watching & discussing Adam Hamilton's video, "Half Truths". This is a six part session anyone can jump into at any time.

When this is completed we will begin "The Parables of Jesus". This is a DVD-based Bible study with participant guides, enhanced with reading and thoughtful discussion.

*The Seekers* were formed at *New Covenant's* very beginning, in the Catfish Cove Restaurant, 1981. I missed a SS class and was voted in as class leader; following Claude Ray, the original teacher. After a number of years, Mr. Connie Pullen took over this leadership role. After Connie's death, I again began coordinating class lessons, and am still at it.

*The Seekers* class enhances and complements your worship experience.

Yours in Christ,  
Marcia

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## Junior High/Senior High Sunday School

By Dale Wolfe

We are utilizing books called *Talk Sheets for Teens* with the youth Sunday school class. These books work on everyday situations and events in a teen's life of today. Even these are sometimes outdated with the fast and changing times we live in but we adapt to fit the life they exist in. Each lesson is 1 to 4 pages depending on the book and have different lessons pertaining to them that have either biblical advice or biblical similarities. Face it, some problems teens deal with are ageless and must stand the test of time.

We generally have between 3 and 7 people in the class, ranging from 7<sup>th</sup> grade to 11<sup>th</sup> grade. This can make for an interesting conversation on occasion. When we are finished with a lesson or hit a dead spot I let the class teach me about the life of a teen in today's world. I have learned how to use the phrase "yeet" and I now understand "SWAG". These phrases are already outdated and not used much anymore but if you see a youth in the hall feel free to ask them how to use these in a sentence.

God bless and have a great month!





*My prayers are not always spoken  
 With words of grace and rhyme  
 That starts with "Gracious Heavenly Father"  
 Conclude with "Amen" every time.  
 My prayers from inner spirit,  
 From the deepest part of me,  
 Sometimes must claim frustration  
 In expressing spirit needs.  
 So, Father, hear my groaning.  
 Count my crying wordless keen  
 As a prayer from deep within me.  
 Those places only You can see.  
 If I laugh in course of crying,  
 or curse because of fear,  
 Lord, just listen to my spirit  
 Speaking words for You to hear.  
 For Your Love transcends all boundaries,  
 Need for words, or pretty phrase.  
 Understanding what we're meaning,  
 When we don't know what to say.  
 ~ Dianne McDonald, 9/22/2012~*



## Recipes FROM THE Church Kitchen

### Jalapeno Bacon Deviled Eggs

- ◆ 12 Large Hard Boiled Eggs
  - ◆ 1/4 Cup Sour Cream
  - ◆ 1/4 Cup Mayonnaise  
(plus an additional tablespoon, if needed)
  - ◆ 1 1/2 Teaspoon Yellow Mustard
  - ◆ 1 1/2 Teaspoon Dijon Mustard
  - ◆ 2 Teaspoons White Vinegar
  - ◆ 1/4 Teaspoon Paprika
  - ◆ Sea Salt & Pepper, to taste
  - ◆ 1/2 Large Jalapeno  
(cored and seeded, finely diced)
  - ◆ 6 Pieces Thick-Sliced Bacon  
(cooked & crispy), Chopped
- 1) Slice each hard boiled egg in half and scoop the yolks into a bowl. With a fork, mash the yolks well.
  - 2) To the bowl of yolks, add the sour cream, mayonnaise, Dijon mustard, yellow mustard, paprika, and vinegar. Add salt and pepper to taste. Add the diced jalapeno, just a little at a time, stirring and tasting after each addition until you reach the desired heat level. Add in the bacon. Mix until all ingredients are well incorporated.
  - 3) Spoon the yolk mixture into a quart-size bag. Snip one of the bottom corners and press firmly on the baggie to pipe the filing into the egg halves. And enjoy!