

We're having to do things a little differently as we heed the experts warning to stay home in hopes to slow or prevent the spread of COVID-19. Even though we aren't gathering together in the church building, we're still a church family, and we have news and updates to share during this time.

### **We have a new name, but we're still us!**

After months of prayer, discussions and planning that led up to a unanimous vote from Highland Park members on Sunday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, we're so excited to share the news: Highland Park Baptist Church has a new name - - **The Church at Highland Park**.

Although we have a new name, we're not a new church. We have a legacy we're proud of with a foundation of service laid by generations before us and we're not only proud to honor that, we feel a deep responsibility to continue the work they started by stewarding a vibrant, growing church in the heart of Austin, which is why our church body acted to make this change. We will continue to embody true Baptist principles that include Soul Freedom, Church Freedom, Religious Freedom and Bible Freedom, but we will operate under a new name that better reflects our brand.

Many thanks to Church Council Chair, Rusty Shelton, for taking the helm on this, including bringing in some branding experts from his company Zilker Media.

We've already been working to get the new name updated:

- The name has been changed with the state
- The church's Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are all updated and have a new handle: @churchatHP
- Our bank account & accounting system have been updated with the new name.

Next up...

- New website!



A pastor friend of mine posted this scripture recently as the efforts to “flatten the curve” and “slow the spread” began: *The prudent see danger and seek refuge, but the foolish keep going and pay the price.*  
- Proverbs 27:12

As I read that I laughed at what a good scripture it is for this time but then I started thinking about it. It’s really true that there is a new danger in our world today. Not the kind we think of like war or weather but the kind of danger that tells us to seek refuge. If we keep going and ignore what’s going on, there will be a price to pay and that price will be paid by many.

I don’t do really well being closed up. I like going and being around people but that’s not the prudent thing to do. I feel pretty certain that in a few months I and mine are going to be okay, but I also know that we all know people who would not do well if they contracted this virus, so staying at a distance is a necessity.

It’s difficult to be church from a distance, but I think we can do it! We will be sharing educational and worship experiences through our new YouTube channel and in-house email. Our Church Council and staff will be meeting virtually to think through how we can continue through the next few weeks. We are working to stream or tape an entire service, we’re seeking devotions to send out during this time, and we will talk about what the staff can do to help our congregation through this time.

I’m asking that you continue to pray for our church, our community and our world. Please reach out to those you know are alone and in need of a kind word. If you know of people in need don’t hesitate to let us know so we can help if at all possible.

I’m praying for you all and look forward to the day we can see one another face to face.

Peace be with you,  
Cheryl

Dear friends,

I hope that this note finds you and your family healthy and as happy as possible in the middle of these surreal times. The kids are climbing the walls out here in Lake Travis but we're doing well considering the circumstances.

When so much is changing around us it becomes more important to rally around things that don't change - faith, family, friends and church - as each becomes a foundation for us to rebuild from. We are going to get through this pandemic together and while some things will be quite different for a while, we're committed to ensuring our church stays connected throughout.



To that end, the Church Council met via Zoom on Sunday, March 29, and among other things, put together a "battle plan" for the church over the next few weeks to support our congregation and broader community.

Here are a few key items we wanted to call your attention to:

1. **Sunday Morning Church Service** - Starting Sunday, March 29th, we will be expanding the sermons we've been sharing over the past two weeks to a full church service that will be filmed and shared with the entire congregation. You'll be able to simply click the link in your email (just like the sermons the past few weeks) and experience church from your home.
2. **Virtual Sunday School** - Starting Sunday, March 29th, at 10 AM my Dad, Walt Shelton, will be leading a Sunday school class for anyone who wants to join. The class will be conducted on Zoom and we'll send out details each week.
3. **Devotionals + Social Media** - As Cheryl mentioned in her note, we're beginning a devotional series along the lines of what we do during the holidays to help our members share thoughts and devotions during this homebound period. We'll be sharing those each week and would love to have you contribute your own devotional to be featured. Additionally, our staff will continue to provide information across our social media channels.

4. **Please Continue Giving (Online or by Mail)** - One reality of having virtual church services is that it doesn't set up very well for a virtual offering. We are keeping all of the commitments we made for the budget and we would be extremely grateful for you to continue to give according to your pledge either by donating [online via credit card or e-check here](#) or mailing a check to the church.
  
5. **Touch Groups + Potential Virtual "Office Hours"** - Kathy Stanley has done a great job re-establishing our Touch Groups and has a number of leaders in place but needs 11 more people to volunteer to lead a small group. If you would be willing to volunteer, please email Kathy at [Kathycstanley@gmail.com](mailto:Kathycstanley@gmail.com). Additionally, we are thinking about starting a virtual version of the "office hours" that Cheryl was doing at the restaurant next door. We would probably do this via Zoom just to give members a chance to interact with each other during the week but we wanted to gauge interest first.
  
6. **Please Let Us Know if You Have Emergency Needs** - We have some members who may be in a situation where they are low on supplies, food or other vital items and are not able to get access to those items. If you are in this position, please contact the church and we'll do everything we can to help you get what you need.

Please let me know if you have any questions or ideas on ways we can best steward our congregation through this challenging period.

Thanks,  
Rusty Shelton  
Church Council Chair

We may not be meeting in our church building, but we're still a church family. Here are some of the ways that the ministries and staff are staying active, and some ways that you can stay involved, too...

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### Worship Service Group

Kay Greenhaw, *chair*



Our Sunday morning services may not be happening in our beautiful Sanctuary right now, but we are doing our best to find ways that our members and friends can worship our God through this time. Each Sunday, we'll share a sermon or service recorded by the church staff and on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, we're sending out devotions written by our members. The Worship team has been in discussion about how we can make such a special time in our church year -- Holy Week and Easter Sunday -- special from home. When you sit down to watch the Palm Sunday service on April 5, please have something to partake during our time of communion. We have also decided to keep our commitment to purchase Easter lilies from Down Home Ranch as a way to support the ranch and our Worship Ministry. The dedications will be sent out to the church body on Easter along with pictures of the beautiful lilies in our Sanctuary. The staff hopes to find a way to distribute the lilies after they are used for Easter service recordings. If you'd like to donate a lily in memory or honor of someone, please visit [www.hpbcaustin.org/lilies](http://www.hpbcaustin.org/lilies).

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### Servant Service Group

Kathy Stanley, *chair*



Touch Groups have been re-done, with 5-6 households in each, and a number of folks volunteered to oversee a group at our congregational gathering on March 1. We still need a few more people to volunteer to lead one of these small groups. If you would be willing to volunteer, please email Kathy at [Kathycstanley@gmail.com](mailto:Kathycstanley@gmail.com). If you need a copy of the directory in order to call, email, or snail mail your church friends, please request a copy by emailing [office@hpbcaustin.org](mailto:office@hpbcaustin.org).

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## Christian Education Service Group

Donna Reisenbigler, *chair*



Walt Shelton is leading a virtual Sunday School class each Sunday morning through the online platform Zoom. Zoom can be downloaded on a phone, laptop, desktop, or tablet, and must be installed before joining a meeting. Walt's lessons will focus on Easter and Lenten themes. These lessons are intended to be interactive, rather than just lecture, and all are welcome to join in. The link to each Sunday's Zoom meeting plus study suggestions will be emailed out during the week. The link will be shared again on Sunday mornings and posted to the church's [homepage](#).

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## The Chancel Choir

Rachel Davis, *Director of Congregational Music*

The Palm Sunday Cantata next Sunday has been postponed but not canceled. The Chancel Choir wants to be able to give it the right amount of in-person rehearsal before a performance. Currently, Rachel is looking into a "hymn of the week" to keep music alive in our virtual worship times. Keep an eye out for this in your email.

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## Children's Ministry

Abby Byrd, *Children's Ministry Coordinator*

Our Palm Sunday Picnic may not be happening, but Abby is finding ways to keep the spiritual, educational, and physical care of our kids a top priority. Special Easter care packages will be going out to the kids in the next week, so parents, keep an eye out. And each Tuesday and Thursday, Abby is emailing lessons with a Bible story and activity so our kids can learn and grow together, even if they're apart.

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## Youth Ministry

Masyn Evans-Clements, *Interim Minister for Youth and Outreach*

The youth are going to have Sunday School through Zoom on Sundays at 11:00 am after the 10:00 am adult Sunday School class finishes. Masyn will send out the link for the Zoom meeting each week.

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## Missions Service Group

Alana Mallard, *chair*

Our missions friends are changing some of their processes to keep their distance: Meals on Wheels delivers two weeks of meals, and the next delivery from our building will be April 3, caseworkers are making checkup calls to clients; Drive A Senior West Austin is doing only essential drives, has ramped up its food bank, and volunteers are making checkup calls to clients; Micah 6 Food Pantry hands out prepacked boxes of food in the University Pres courtyard and has asked older volunteers to stand down for now. Food pantries and others are struggling and now would be a great time to make an online donation to any of the great local missions we support. Thanks, Alana



The official Alzheimer's Walk was postponed, but my family and I still took a walk around our neighborhood that Saturday in memory of those we've lost: my grandfather, Art Coltharp, Don's mom, Alana's dad, & many others. We also walked in honor of those who are currently fighting the disease, including my aunt, and their loving & loyal caregivers. **Thank you to those who donated to our team for the great efforts of Alzheimer's Texas.** My little family is doing the best we can during this different time we're all experiencing. Some days are better than others, and we're grateful for all that we do have. Love, Kelley DeCleene



The Dillard family is hanging in there as best we can. We want to spend as much time as possible Philip, Kayla, and the boys, but knowing Philip must remain illness free as he recovers from his brain aneurysm and subsequent surgeries. Don and I want to thank you all for your prayers, texts, calls, and support during such a difficult time in our lives. We really miss our church family, and wait (impatiently) for the day when we can all be together again. Stay safe.

– Love, Becky

## Finance Service Group

Nancy Osgood, *chair*

We find ourselves in uncharted waters. I know I am not alone in concerns about how this public health challenge is affecting our church, our staff, and each individual. We have been a very devoted congregation who support each other and our church, but we are accustomed to doing that with beautiful music, hugs, handshakes and an offering plate passed by a smiling friend. Our staff is working tirelessly to keep us all connected and involved. They are taking turns coming to the building, holding remote planning meetings, answering calls and mail, and trying to keep the wheels on.

I know that each of us have our own concerns, but I also know that each of us will continue to support our church as we have pledged to do. We are working to make that as easy as we can.

We continue to get any checks that are mailed to the church. The [website](#) has a very convenient way to give electronically by check or credit card. Donations can be given through PayPal with the email [hpbcoffice@hpbcaustin.org](mailto:hpbcoffice@hpbcaustin.org). We are working on adding text donations and we will forward instructions on that as soon as available.

The Church at Highland Park is a strong community. We will weather this together, even if we're not in services. We appreciate your giving and it will insure that we have the funds to maintain our staff and pay the recurring expenses of our building. As we alter the way we operate, please remember to continue giving.

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## Outreach & Technology Service Group

Hannah Neas, *chair*



We are trying to keep the outreach of our church going mostly through social media. Since our service groups are keeping busy with their ministries in new and exciting ways, there is a lot for us to share with our friends in a virtual way. "Liking" or "Loving" posts and commenting on them boosts their visibility, so please stay active on our pages so we can get our (new) name out there, even in this different time. New posts are made almost every day of the week, so check back daily!

Cheryl, Masyn, Kelley, Hannah, and Kade Keith have also begun conversations with a website design company who will work closely with the staff to study the current site, design the new look, and roll it out in the next few months.



## Church Staff



The office staff is meeting weekly via Zoom to share information, be sure bases are covered and then ensure that information is getting out to the congregation all week. Virtual worship and digital outreach are planned, along with the assistance from the Service Group chairs, and some small people or furry friends make surprise appearances throughout. The staff is currently planning to issue a challenge to our congregation and friends each Tuesdays on Facebook. Be sure to check it out and join in on the fun! Know that you're all in our prayers.

Thanks for how you're supporting us, one another, and our world during this strange and difficult time. We are so proud to be a part of The Church @ Highland Park!

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# thechurch@ Highland Park

Rev. Cheryl Kimble, Pastor  
Dr. C. Ray Burchette, Pastor Emeritus  
Abby Byrd, Children's Ministry Coordinator  
Rachel Davis, Director of Congregational Music  
Kelley DeCleene, Director of Church Operations  
Becky Dillard, Ministry Assistant  
Carolyn Doolittle, Church Bookkeeper  
Masyn Evans-Clements, Interim Minister to Youth & Outreach  
Marcia Melendez, Sunday janitor  
Angel Perez, Weekday janitor