

East Cross News

Monthly Publication
of East Cross United
Methodist Church



east cross



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Church Office:
918-333-0810

FAX: 918-335-1664

Early Childhood
Center: 918-333-3814

www.eastcross.org



Newsletter
articles for the
next issue are due
in the church office
by noon on
Tuesday,
November 20th.

Email articles to
office@eastcross.org

Sermon Series:

BEING RICH IN WHAT MATTERS MOST

November 4

Rich in Good Deeds

1 Timothy 6:17-19

Ephesians 2:8-10

Acts 4:33-34; 10:38

Matthew 5:41

Hebrews 10:24-45

Communion

All Saints Day

November 11

Rich Toward God

Luke 12:16-12

1 Timothy 6:18

Consecration Sunday

**10:00am — One Combined
Worship Service followed by
All Church Celebration Meal
in Christian Life Center (Gym)**

Wednesday Night Connections

November and December get busy very quickly, so we want to share with you the upcoming schedule for

Wednesday Night Connections. While Pastor Jeff's "Going Deeper" class will continue to meet through the month of November, we will also be offering opportunities to hear from some of the leaders in our community about the work they do. We will learn more about each organization and how you might be able to partner with them.

On December 5, we will offer a time for discussion about the 2019 Special Called General Conference dealing with the subject of human sexuality. Then on December 12, we will once again have our Christmas Sampler, an evening of joy that will help prepare you for the celebration of Christmas.

November — December Schedule

5:30pm Meal

Guests, Children, Youth Eat Free

6:00pm Classes

November 7 — Errol Hada

Lighthouse Outreach Mission

November 14 — Penny Meadows

MUTUAL / Tuesday House

November 21 — Thanksgiving Holiday

No Connections

November 28 — Jason Barta

Boys and Girls Club

December 5 — 2019 Special Called

General Conference Discussion

December 12 — Christmas Sampler

Another step in our journey...

As pastors, we have been asked to share what is happening within the greater United Methodist Church. There will be a special called General Conference in February of 2019 to make decisions about our future together as a Church. A majority of the Bishops agreed to support a plan for our future they are calling the One Church Plan. We live streamed a conversation about our upcoming General Conference hosted by our Bishop. If you want to know more about the plans that are being presented for the future of our church, you can contact the office. We have an overview of those plans.

I think the following article best describes the issues we are dealing with. I present this article as a whole, without editing. The writers hold our traditional values as United Methodists.

Pastor Jeff

The following letter was submitted by the Baltimore-Washington Conference Chapter of the Wesley Covenant Association in response to a column written by Bishop LaTrelle Easterling, titled "We Can Remain Together: Why I Support the One Church Plan."

To our beloved members of the Baltimore-Washington Conference of The United Methodist Church:

Grace and peace be unto you. Our Annual Conference is blessed to have Bishop Easterling as our leader. She is a person of fierce integrity and a faithful follower of Jesus Christ. We pray constantly for our bishop, her family, and for her leadership among us. At this critical time in the life of our UMC, we continue to be confused by the mixed messages coming from our Conference and denominational leadership. However, we write today to address some of the

critical issues affecting our Church, and present to you our perspective of a grace-filled, hopeful future.

Marriage is a covenant with vows before God and the church. In that sense, it is just like the vows each one of us takes at our Baptism, and some of us take at our Ordination. We vow our support of The United Methodist Church, its doctrine and *Discipline*. The *Discipline* is our covenant with one another. On it, with the Scriptures upon which it is established, we base our common life. Therefore, when vows are broken, covenant is shattered, and irreconcilable differences exist, it is like a divorce. Covenant holds us together, but we see a covenant currently in tatters.

At a recent district gathering we were told by our leadership that the situation our denomination is facing is not that bad. Yet we're urged to have critical conversations with our congregations, and do it now. Then comes suggestion that the current situation in our UMC is analogous to a divorce. These mixed messages breed confusion. As leaders in this conference — regardless of our level of leadership — we are charged with navigating how to care for the individual churches and people, while the General Conference process plays itself out. At this critical juncture in the life of our church, it is important that we lead with care, compassion, clarity and courage.

Indeed, only God knows what our UMC will look like after February 2019. But if there is a real possibility of a "divorce," then it would seem prudent to help all of us to be prepared. In these times of uncertainty, we should prepare for the worst and hope for the best. Interestingly enough, we are not even sure anymore what the "worst" is.

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What we hear from some denominational leaders is that the “worst” is a schism. But is that really the worst? Given the duration, expense and pain of this struggle we are in, we are hearing and even wondering if peaceful separation isn’t preferable to more battles, more trials, more time, energy and resources spent away from our primary mission of making disciples. Brothers and Sisters, we don’t believe our disagreement is really about homosexuality. The focus on homosexuality is a *symptom*, not the problem. When going to the doctor with persistent painful symptoms, usually a skilled physician looks beyond symptom relief to see if healing the cause is possible. If our leaders don’t or won’t address the deeper causes that are producing these symptoms, then where is our hope?

Our core problem is that over the years we have lost any sort of unifying hermeneutic and view of Scripture that allows for these kinds of disagreements to be solved by thorough and thoughtful exegetical work. We have no agreement on what Scriptural authority means in practice. While we do have the so-called “Wesleyan” Quadrilateral, that framework has actually not provided unity due to disagreements on how to use it, and even its own creator, the Rev. Albert Outler, regretted its creation. *What do we do with Scripture?* What *is* it, and how do we construct theology from it? These are important questions that divide us, and differences on sexuality come directly out of this division. The Word of God is our primary source of authority and Christian practice. This is so not only because of the wisdom and direction that flow from those sacred texts; but also because the Word of God is Jesus (John 1:14), and He is the Cornerstone of our church. The Bible is not silent on the issue of homosexuality. In fact, for more than two thousand years the majority of the Christian church still contends that the Bible, from cover to cover, promotes a heterosexual viewpoint. This isn’t really about the issue of

homosexuality, but a general approach to biblical authority and interpretation. Worse, such interpretations even begin to erode our shared belief in the Lordship and authority of Jesus Christ, the Word Incarnate.

Our relationship with Jesus, the Word Made Flesh, must be rightly grounded in the written Word of God. When we, as individuals and as the Church, begin to diminish or ignore biblical authority over our lives, we also undermine the supremacy and absolute authority of Christ over our lives. Staying true to Jesus means staying true to his Word and allowing it to shape and conform us into his image, rather than the other way around. Following Jesus means he is King, and that our identity and purpose is found in him who makes all things new.

This issue is also not like interpretations of Scripture about women in ministry or slavery. We are proud that our UMC recognizes women as equal partners in ministry and leadership. There are many places in Scripture where women’s leadership of Israel and the Church are held up as positive and a blessing. Examples of Deborah, Esther, Priscilla and Aquila all come to mind. In actuality, our Church lost its historic focus of the elevation of women to leadership, and it was later recovered. The same can be said for chattel slavery. In fact, our Methodist ancestors were originally champions of the abolitionist cause, *until pressure from worldly culture infiltrated the Church and changed it from the outside*. It is this which we contend has happened with our divisions on human sexuality. It seems highly possible that the UMC will be getting a divorce in 2019. *These are not simple disagreements on nonessential differences in interpretation*. These are *irreconcilable* differences as to how to approach our most sacred document. Is it the written word of God, or does it contain a word from God?

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This is a fundamental difference. Nobody wants this, but maybe it is time. Let's talk openly and plan prayerfully for how we will have to lead and love through what could be a season of uncertainty. Christ is still our Cornerstone, and He will anchor our church.

In our attempts to "save" our Church, there is the constant appeal for us to be an *inclusive* Church. The Baltimore-Washington Conference Chapter of the Wesley Covenant Association also embraces inclusivity, as long it doesn't exclude God and his teachings in Holy Scripture. History shows that other mainline Protestant churches that have taken similar paths of "inclusiveness" have not fared well. Over the course of 46 years, involving many debates, Circles of Grace, and much prayer for guidance, we are further apart than when we started. It's time to recognize that we espouse not two different opinions on nonessential issues, but

two different understandings of the Christian faith.

Maybe in our planning for the divorce and seeing the reality of what it will mean, we will have a change of heart and sit down together with a new spirit of trust in the power of God for transformation and redemption. Or, maybe these conversations will bring to light just how far from each other we really are about some of the core issues such as mission, vision and understanding of biblical authority and the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Either way, we can show the world how to trust God through painful and very difficult circumstances. Let's trust God and each other enough to speak openly and honestly with one another so that while we may hurt, we will do no more harm.

In Christ's love,

*The Baltimore-Washington Conference Chapter
of the Wesleyan Covenant Association*

Traditional Worship

*"Sing praise to the Lord...
declare among the people His
deeds." Psalm 9:11*

How awesome it is to sing about the goodness of our God! So many great hymns let us lift our voices with thanksgiving about God's blessings! In our choir rehearsals each Wednesday, our choir members meet together and rehearse music for the upcoming services. However, it is much more than a rehearsal process.

Together, we have friendships. We are able to share laughter, joy, tears, and needs with each other. Each member of the East Cross Sanctuary Choir has a special gift! There is so much joy in singing together, and as the director, I am so thankful to have such amazing people singing with me in worship!

As always, there is an open invitation to you to be a part of East Cross Choir! Come make a joyful noise with us, and you can be a part of the joy that comes

from singing praises to our awesome God!

Margie Green,
Traditional Worship

PS: Save the date!!! Our Christmas Sampler will be Wednesday, December 12 during Connections time. This year, you will be a part of our live radio show on K-BEC! Santa, along with the EC Singers, will spin the records of all your favorite Christmas hits!

From Pastor Chad...

We are so close to that time of year where we take a day to pause and give thanks for all the blessings in our lives while enjoying some turkey, mashed potatoes and pumpkin pie. You know what day I am talking about, right? Thanksgiving—the day that so many rush through so they can prepare for the coming sales of Black Friday. It seems to me with each year that passes, as this day of thanks draws to an end, that my level of thanksgiving is not representative of the level of blessing that I have received. There is so much to be thankful for and making this the focus of just one day does not seem to work. What if this year we did things differently? What if we took the entire month of November and found at least one thing to be thankful for each day instead?

To make this a reality we need to be more intentional in our relationship with God.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (CEB) tell us, “¹⁶ Rejoice always. ¹⁷ Pray continually. ¹⁸ Give thanks in every situation because this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”

Pay specific attention to the adverbs in those three verses – always, continually, and every situation (okay that is three adverbs and a noun, but hopefully you get the point). We are to be constantly connected with God and it is in this connection that we rejoice, pray and give thanks. It is in this constant connection that we become more fully aware of the movement of God in our lives thus becoming more mindful of the daily blessings for which we are to be thankful.

I have been practicing this intentionality over the last few weeks so that I don’t miss this year’s Thanksgiving celebration, and one of the things that I am thankful for is... you! It has been

such an awesome blessing in my life to have had the opportunity to serve as one of the pastors here at East Cross for the last 12 and a half years. When I look back on this inexperienced kid that showed up in 2006 and compare him with the person I am today in 2018, I am overwhelmed. There have been periods of marked growth and there have been moments where I fell short, but, through them all, you have given me the space and support I needed, and still need, to become more fully the person that God has created me to be. Thank you! Thank you for all that you have done, not only for me, but for my family as well. We have been truly blessed by you and this amazing church family and I will always be thankful!

Blessings!

Pastor Chad

Connections

Going Deeper with Pastor Jeff

- Nov. 7 - Errol Hada (Lighthouse)
- Nov. 14 - Penny Meadows (MUTUAL)
- Nov. 28 - Jason Barta (Boys and Girls Club)
- Dec. 5 - 2019 General Conference Discussion
- Dec. 12 - 2nd Annual Christmas Sampler

Meal starts at 5:30pm



Student Ministry

Thankful Beyond Measure

As we head into the Thanksgiving season, we have so much to be thankful for. Every time I look at the Cross, I think about the story of the Gospel and how thankful I am. It's because of this, that I am looking to serve our Church and our Lord! I would like to highlight some of the great opportunities we have to open up our doors and serve our community.

In October, our Student Ministry opened our front parking lot, along with the EC Kids program, and invited people to stop by for some candy and a family friendly Trunk or Treat! It was a great time for families in our community to stop by, grab some candy, and enjoy a fun environment!

I'm really excited about our Girls Weekend Retreat coming up on November 16-17! This will be a girls only retreat here at the church with encouragement, talks, and group discussion about how to "Unleash" the power of God in your life! Ashley Colliver, along with other adult volunteers, will be leading our girls in pursuing the One True God during this amazing weekend event!

Let me also thank you, our church, for all the ministry opportunities you allow us to do! We wouldn't be able to host 6th-12th girls in our church without your faithful giving. We wouldn't be able to take kids to camp every summer, without your camp scholarships and giving. We are able to minister to a lot of students because of the faithful servants here in our church family. Again, THANK YOU!

Evan Holmes,
Director of Youth Ministries



Contemporary Worship

Around this time of year, it's so easy to start feeling the stress of the holidays looming. Travel plans, buying gifts, and especially being around tons of people, including family, can be enough to make you want to take shelter in your locked house and not come out until after the new year. I am so thankful that my church family, and especially my worship team, can be my place of refuge when I'm feeling stressed. I can't count the number of times that

being around people that encourage me, offer advice, or even just listen has caused my hectic week to become still. This happens for me often when we meet for worship practice, or when I meet with my small group. There is a reason Paul wrote in Hebrews chapter 10 to not give up meeting together. He knew that our greatest source of encouragement comes from other believers. I encourage each of you during this holiday season

to make a new commitment to meeting together with the other believers in our church, either in your small group, or even one-on-one over something as simple as a cup of coffee. You may be surprised at how much it helps you to slow down and truly enjoy and become thankful for the upcoming season.

God Bless,
Zack Michel,
Contemporary Worship

EC Kids

As we enter this season of Thanksgiving, we may find ourselves reflecting more often on how to raise a thankful child. Children need to know that gratitude doesn't just *feel* good. Making a habit of gratitude can also *be good for us*. Like other positive emotions, feeling grateful on a regular basis can have a big effect on our lives – as can music. And this month, we're combining the two. Practicing music alone is fine. But when you play with other people, you really start to create something special. You build a better beat. That's what cooperation is all about—working together to do more than you can do alone. By ourselves, we can do a little.

But we can always do more together. Each of us has a voice and a part we can play; we can all participate with what God is doing in our world. If we get that right, we can make beautiful music together!



Our focus this month is not only to learn about cooperation and how to truly work together, but to be thankful through it all. We will learn to be grateful for not only the big things, like friends and family and church, but the

little things as well, like our favorite smells, the feel of leaves or listening to our favorite beat.

CIA (Christians In Action)

On Sunday, November 11 our church will host our annual Celebration Luncheon. CIA will help carry trays to tables, get drinks, help clean up dishes when people finish eating, simply chat with our members and help in any other area that may need assistance. This is such a great way to get our CIA kids to serve our own church family in a personal way!

*Aimee Hall, Director of
Children's Ministries*

CHRISTMAS TREE REMINDER

We are currently in the process of trying to collect 15–20+ artificial green Christmas trees of all sizes for our upcoming Advent services and our Christmas Eve service stage design. If you or someone you know would be willing to donate a tree you are not using or want to get rid of, please let us know! If you are entertaining the idea of buying a new Christmas tree, especially over the Black Friday shopping weekend, we would really love to take your old tree off of your hands!

The week of November 25–December 1, we will begin accepting trees dropped off at the church, or we can come pick them up! You can simply call the church office and let them know, or call or text Zack Michel at 580-467-3469 for pickup beginning November 25.

Thank you so much to those who have already donated or plan to donate! The stage design for our holiday services is going to look incredible!

EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER

Dear East Cross United Methodist Church,

Church leaders, attendees and fellow servants of our Lord, you continue to make it a pleasure to be part of this ministry for the past 23 years (working within the nursery and in the Early Childhood Center's program). Your loyalty and continued support through a variety of means, is always greatly appreciated by me. All the work that I have done, all the time that I have given to this ministry has been matched by the ideas, hours, and hard work of SO many other East Cross UMC members, our program's teaching staff, our Committee's support and its participating families who each one, at times, have given up free time and their very valued family time to do more than their share for this wonderful ministry of ours.

I am blessed to work with, again, SO many wonderful persons of Christ over the years and I know that I will continue to work hard knowing too that each of you will continue to join me.

We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.

- Romans 8:28 NRSV

~ Coleen

Scholastic Book Fair

November 5 – 9 1st Floor Mural Hall

We welcome ALL program families AND East Cross church families to stop by the tables full of

books available to purchase. Take time to leisurely browse all the books offered to find those that will enhance your child's (grandchild's?) interest and love of reading!

- ◇ The books will also be on display for **2 Sundays (November 4 and 11)** if this is a more convenient time to come and check them out
- ◇ **ONLINE Ordering** is an option for everyone at <http://www.scholastic.com/bf/eastcrossecc>
- ◇ There will also be a chance to fulfill a teacher's "**Wish List**" of books for their classroom! Simply select a slip that has been completed by the teacher, locate the book **OR** include the slip of paper with the book(s) you've chosen to purchase and we'll make sure the teacher receives it with your family's name on it as "Given By".

With the upcoming holiday gift-giving season, please consider giving BOOKS to the young children on your gift-giving list – they last longer than many toys and can be enjoyed by the child AND you!

In addition to adding new books into a child's home library, our Early Childhood Center's library *directly benefits* as well. Our program receives a percentage of all book sales which is used toward purchasing Scholastic books **or** other classroom teaching items.

Your support of this opportunity is *greatly appreciated!*

~ Coleen Williams,

Director @ East Cross Early Childhood Center

EAST CROSS NURSERY

The most awaited holiday is just around the corner – Thanksgiving. On Thanksgiving we celebrate our gratitude in life. Everybody is excited for the festive dinner and Black Friday Sales the next morning. Families learn about new Thanksgiving recipes and they teach children how to be thankful. Thanksgiving is definitely a day that everyone looks forward to, but it should not just be celebrated once a year; it should be celebrated every day. We should always be thankful of all the blessings we receive. We must learn how to appreciate what we have and not what we don't have. Every morning we

wake up is a great blessing. We have yet another day to create memories, another chance to fight our battle, and another page in our life that we can direct.

While you and your family enjoy all that Thanksgiving offers, be sure and take a moment to think about everything you are thankful for, and thank God for all the little things in your life that you may sometimes take for granted.

Happy Thanksgiving,

Liz VanDeVenter, Nursery Director

November Outreach News

Kairos

The October event at Dick Connor Correctional Center went very well again. Bartlesville provided 400 dozen cookies for the inmates. Garry Gunter said they are already planning for May 2019.

MOUNTAIN OF FOOD

Sunday, October 14 started our Mountain of Food collection. Kay Ruehlen is very happy with the way plans are coming together. **Volunteers and trucks are needed on Monday, November 12 at 5:30pm at church to load and deliver the Mountain of Food to local agencies.** If you can help, please contact Kay at 918-815-3564. Donated food items go to Agape, Concern Food Pantry and Lighthouse Outreach Mission. Have you decided what items you want to provide?

Angel Tree

November 18 through December 9 are the dates to choose and shop for your special angel; DHS Foster children and Big Brothers Big Sisters. Such a blessing to provide for the less fortunate.

Ray of Hope

East Cross had a good report from Bob Fraser with video of the refurbished Grace Epworth building that was gifted to Ray of Hope. This is such a wonderful ministry for abused children.



Tuesday House

We continue to be blessed with donations from individuals cleaning out, moving or estate sales. We continue to have good customers purchasing items so we can continue to provide for MUTUAL Girls. Tuesday House is open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday to receive donations; retail selling is on Tuesday and Saturday. Something new on the first Saturday of each month in the annex (old MUTUAL Building) is \$1.00 day. Come check us out.

Outreach Committee

Looking for new members to join this group. Interested? Contact Jeretta Amburn or Melda Howard.

Keep your calendar handy as East Cross is a very busy place and you don't want to miss out.

We are learning to follow Jesus, inviting others to join the journey! Continue to pray and LOVE one another.

Concern Food Pantry

Concern Food Pantry continues to provide food to more and more people in our community. More and more food is needed each month all over town.

GENEROSITY BOXES

THE LIGHTHOUSE HOMELESS SHELTER will receive the donations in our **Generosity Boxes** during the month of **November**. While visiting with the Lighthouse staff concerning their needs at this time, the comment was made that many of their clients have said that being able to cleanup, wash their clothes, and rest for awhile helps build their confidence and self-esteem. At this time, they are in need of:

- Disposable Razors**
- Deodorant / Soap**
- Toothbrushes / Toothpaste**
- Shampoo / Conditioner**
- Wash Cloths**
- Hair Bands / Ponytail Holders**

What a blessing for these clients and you when you take this opportunity to place a few of these items in your shopping cart and drop them off in our **Generosity Boxes** located at each entrance to our church!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR...

All Church Celebration Meal

Sunday, November 11 — Christian Life Center
Following the 10:00am Combined Worship Service

PRAYER LIST

New Prayer Requests...

Rosy and Leelani Swisher (Sharon's daughter-in-law and granddaughter), Patty Tanner, Chris Watson (Chad Perceful's aunt)

Vanna Baddley, Annie Bollinger (daughter of Charlie and LeAnne Christensen), Paul Broerman, Kathy Christian, Joan Collins (friend of Pam Knuth), Doris and Eddie Danford (Brenda Commons' parents), Dave Faust (Melda and Gary Howard's son-in-law), Muriel Faust (Dave Faust's mother), Don Fleming (Teresa Dietz' friend), Blaine Fraser (Bob Fraser's dad), Marcia Goode, Amy Kelton (Teresa Dietz' friend), Barry Knuth, James Kuntz, Louis and Emily Kuntz, George Lennon, Bob Murnan, Leslie Neff, Mike Paxson (brother-in-law of Coleen Williams), Marie Puckett, Euela Randall, Spence Rigdon, Helen Shell, Jeana Smith (Tim Smith's sister), Isabella Sousa, Kermit Tanzey, Joyce Taylor, Jeremy Waldorf, Glenna Wright (Steve Wright's mother), Keith Wyrick (Erville Orndorff's nephew), Allie Zoldoske

Condolences to...

Mike and Maryann Cole on the death of Mike's sister, Judy.

Rose Loyd on the death of her uncle.

Dixie Cody and family on the death of her husband, Robert Cody.

If you know someone that needs to be added or removed from the Prayer List, call the church office at 918-333-0810.

Pray for our Military

- | | | |
|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| * SPC Luis Balli | * CPT Derek Smith | Mark Hathaway |
| * Robbie Lawson | * <i>deployed</i> | LCDR Eric Rolfs |
| * SSG Gary Mabry | | CPT Daniel Smith |
| * SSG Jared Seat | LTC Darrin Cox | CDR Robert Staten |
| | Esn. Lisa Freeman | SFC Clifton White |

MAJ Todd Abshire retired in October. He and his family will continue to reside in Derby, KS. We congratulate him on his retirement and thank him for his years of service as well as the sacrifices he and his family have made over the years.

Ens. Lisa Freeman is finishing her deployment in Spain and will be coming stateside in mid-December. She will have about a month of leave before attending Navy Nuclear Power School in Charleston, SC. We welcome her home and wish her the best in her new assignment.



Please pray for all persons serving in the military and their families. If you have a loved one or a friend currently on active duty in the military and would like them added to our Wall of Honor, please contact Charlie and LeAnne Christensen at chasleanne@gmail.com or 918-327-1226.

All East Cross men are invited to meet for breakfast and fellowship at Eggbert's on Saturday, November 3 at 8am!



Sunday Morning Van Ministry

Call the church office at 918-333-0810 and **leave a message on extension 105** before 7:30am on Sunday mornings. You may also have a standing request to be picked up each week.

ONLINE GIVING...You can give electronically by going to our website www.eastcross.org. Click the menu tab on top of the Welcome page and click on "Give Online" OR scroll to the bottom of our Welcome page and click on "Give." Funds can also be withdrawn automatically weekly or monthly by completing a request form available in the treasurer's office.



East Cross also offers a mobile version of our online giving page to make it easy for you to give anytime from your smart phone. Simply scan the image to the left using your phone's Quick Response (QR) code reader.

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learning to follow Jesus, inviting others to join the journey

Trunk or Treat and Scavenger Hunt!

