

# STARS

*An introduction to our mission and core values*



*Join us on the journey.*



Welcome to the STARS course at Alamo Heights United Methodist Church. We are excited for the opportunity to get to know you and share our mission and our core values with you over the next six weeks.

In addition to providing an orientation to AHUMC, it is our hope that the STARS course will encourage your journey as a follower of Christ. We recognize that disciples are not mass produced or created with the flip of a switch. Instead, the journey of a disciple—someone who lives out the love and teachings of Jesus—takes time. In fact, the process of living as a disciple is a lifetime endeavor that requires lots of space and love.

During your time in the STARS course, we want you to recognize AHUMC as a home—a safe place where all are welcomed and encouraged on their journey of discipleship. We also hope that you will discover threads of beloved identity, ancient rootedness, radical responsibility, authentic community, and the dwelling Spirit woven within the very fabric of the journey. We recognize these divine values as foundational and transformative. Our shorthand for these values is STARS.

Thank you for taking this step to connect to the AHUMC community. We are honored to share the journey with you.

Peace,



Rev. Dr. Darrell Smith, Associate Pastor of Discipleship

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF AHUMC

Founded in 1910, Alamo Heights Methodist Church was formed to serve the rural ranch families north of downtown San Antonio on the corner of Broadway and Poco Streets. In 1924, the church moved into its newly constructed stucco building at 5101 Broadway, which had multiple expansions over the years as the church grew. In 1968, the church became Alamo Heights United Methodist Church with the union of the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church. The church continued to grow in numbers and ministry but outgrew its buildings by 1991. With limited space to expand further, the congregation voted to relocate to its current Basse Road location, which was completed in 1994.

## WHAT IS A UNITED METHODIST?

The United Methodist Church is a 12.6-million-strong global church. The roots of Methodism can be traced to the revival movement of John and Charles Wesley in 18th century England. John Wesley and the early Methodists placed primary emphasis on Christian living, putting faith and love into action. This emphasis on what Wesley referred to as “practical divinity” has continued to be a hallmark of United Methodism today. As United Methodists we believe in open hearts, open minds, and open doors through active engagement with our world. You may find out more about the United Methodist Church by visiting [www.umc.org](http://www.umc.org).

### Pastoral Staff

Rev. Holly Gotelli  
Senior Pastor  
[hgotelli@ahumc.org](mailto:hgotelli@ahumc.org)

Rev. Dinah Shelly  
CLC Teaching Pastor  
[dshelly@ahumc.org](mailto:dshelly@ahumc.org)

Rev. Matt Scott  
Executive Pastor  
[mScott@ahumc.org](mailto:mScott@ahumc.org)

Rev. Donna Strieb  
Prayer & Spiritual  
Formation Pastor  
[dstrieb@ahumc.org](mailto:dstrieb@ahumc.org)

Rev. Dr. Darrell Smith  
Discipleship Pastor  
[dsmith@ahumc.org](mailto:dsmith@ahumc.org)

Rev. Ryan Jacobson  
Associate Pastor  
[rjacobson@ahumc.org](mailto:rjacobson@ahumc.org)

# AHUMC MISSION & CORE VALUES

## Our Mission

Partnering with God to bring the Kingdom of Heaven  
to Earth by making disciples of Jesus Christ

*Go out and train everyone you meet, far and near,  
in this way of life, marking them by baptism in  
the threefold name: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.  
Then instruct them in the practice of all  
I have commanded you. I'll be with you as  
you do this, day after day after day,  
right up to the end of the age.  
-Matthew 28:18-20 (Message)*

## WHAT DOES A DISCIPLE LOOK LIKE?

Disciples do what they see their rabbi doing and live as they see their rabbi living. If we begin with the idea that Jesus is what it looks like when the perfect love and will of God becomes human, then a disciple is someone who follows after Jesus—watching, listening, communing, and learning day by day to live and love as Jesus did. We express this as a church through STARS:

**S****SONSHIP/DAUGHTERHOOD**

We are beloved

**T****TEXT**

We have a story

**A****ACTION**

We have a responsibility

**R****RELATIONSHIP**

We have a family

**S****SPIRIT**

We are not alone

# SONSHIP/ DAUGHTERHOOD

*We are beloved.*



We are all children of God. The love of our divine parent is unconditional and free. We are God's delight and the joy of God's heart. We receive the invitation to live freely as daughters and sons, partnering with God in bringing restoration. We rest, we belong, we follow.

**What was your first image of God?** \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

**How do you see God now?** \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

**How do you think God sees you?** \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

## ART CORNER

*The Return of the Prodigal Son (1636)*  
Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn  
1606-1669

## LUKE 15:31

*Then the father said to him, "Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours."*



## RESOURCES

## KEY BIBLICAL TEXTS:

Genesis 1:26-27	(Humankind is made in the image of God)
The Book of Ruth	(The story of a woman living out daughterhood)
Matthew 3:13-17	(The baptism of Jesus)
Luke 15:11-32	(The story of the Prodigal Son)
Romans 8:12-17	(We are children of God, joint heirs with Christ)

## HELPFUL BOOKS:

*Accidental Herod: Becoming a Leader You Can Live With* by David McNitzky  
*The Return of the Prodigal: A Story of Homecoming* by Henri Nouwen  
*Original Blessing: Putting Sin in its Rightful Place* by Danielle Shroyer

## RELATED MOVIES:

*Saving Mr. Banks* (2013) – Walt Disney Pictures  
*The Lion King* (1994) – Walt Disney Pictures

## VIDEOS:

Visit [ahumc.org/stars](http://ahumc.org/stars) for links to videos.



## NOTES

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

# TEXT

*We have a story.*



There is a story of God in the ancient text of the scriptures. Our story finds meaning in God's Story. The way we wrestle with the Bible matters. Context, community dialogue, and the loving application of the text inform our journey.

**What do you recognize as the key points of God's story?** \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

**What problems or questions do you have about the Bible?** \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

**How does your story fit into God's story?** \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

## ART CORNER

*Moses with the Tablets of Law (1658)*  
Ferdinand Bol  
1616-1680

## EXODUS 34

*The LORD said to Moses: Write these words; in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel.*



## RESOURCES

### KEY BIBLICAL TEXTS:

## Genesis 32 – Jacob wrestles with the Divine

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 – The *Shema* - keep these words in your heart

## Psalm 119 – *The glories of God's story*

## Matthew 5-7 – *The Sermon on the Mount*

## II Timothy 3:16 – *All Scripture is God-breathed*

## HELPFUL BOOKS:

*Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith* by Marvin R. Wilson

*The Bible Tells Me So: Why Defending Scripture Has Made Us Unable to Read It* by Pete Enns

*What is the Bible?: How an Ancient Library of Poems, Letters, and Stories Can Transform the Way You Think and Feel About Everything* by Rob Bell

## RELATED MOVIES:

*Fiddler on the Roof* (1974) – The Mirisch Production Company

### *The Prince of Egypt* (1998) – Dreamworks Animation

## VIDEOS:

Visit [ahumc.org/stars](http://ahumc.org/stars) for links to videos.



## NOTES

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

# ACTION

*We have a responsibility.*



As beloved children of God, we have an invitation and responsibility to love, serve, and honor all of creation. We have a role to play in compassionately putting the broken pieces of the world and our lives back together. As we live into our role in every moment and interaction, we are transformed.

**What brokenness do you see in the world?** \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

**Why do you think this brokenness is so visible to you?** \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

**How can you participate in restoring creation?** \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

## ART CORNER

*The Good Samaritan, after Delacroix (1890)*  
Vincent van Gogh  
1853-1890

## LUKE 10:30-37

*Jesus replied ... "Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."*





## RESOURCES

### KEY BIBLICAL TEXTS:

## Genesis 12 – *The calling of Abram*

Leviticus 19:18 – *Love your neighbor as yourself*

Micah 6:8 – *Do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God*

Luke 10:25-37 – *The story of the good Samaritan*

Matthew 25:31-45 – *I was hungry and you fed me*

## HELPFUL BOOKS:

*An Altar in the World: A Geography of Faith* by Barbara Brown Taylor

*Love Does: Discover a Secretly Incredible Life in an Ordinary World* by Bob Goff

*Same Kind of Different as Me: A Modern-Day Slave, an International Art Dealer, and the Unlikely Woman Who Bound Them Together* by Ron Hall and Denver Moore

## RELATED MOVIES:

*Same Kind of Different as Me* (2017) – Paramount Pictures

*McFarland, USA* (2015) – Walt Disney Pictures

## VIDEOS:

Visit [ahumc.org/stars](http://ahumc.org/stars) for links to videos.



## NOTES

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

# RELATIONSHIP

*We have a family.*



We cannot do life alone. God is relationship and we come from God.  
We live within community—we need it and it needs us.

**What makes the best relationships different?** \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

**What makes relationship difficult?** \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

**Where do you feel at rest?** \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

## ART CORNER

*Ruth goes with Naomi to Bethlehem (1860)*  
Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld  
1794-1872

## RUTH 1:16-17

*But Ruth said, "Do not press me to leave you or to turn back from following you! Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, I will die—there will I be buried. May the Lord do thus and so to me, and more as well, if even death parts me from you!"*



## RESOURCES

### KEY BIBLICAL TEXTS:

Ruth 1:16-17 – *Where you go, I will go and your people will be my people*

## Psalm 133 – *The blessedness of unity*

John 17:20-23 – *That they may become one so the world will know*

## 1 Corinthians 12:12-26 – One body with many members

## Galatians 6:1-2 – *Bear one another's burdens*

## HELPFUL BOOKS:

*The Good and Beautiful Community: Following the Spirit, Extending Grace, Demonstrating Love*

by James Bryan Smith

*From Tablet to Table: Where Community is Found and Identity is Formed* by Leonard Sweet

*Free of Charge: Giving and Forgiving in a Culture Stripped of Grace* by Miroslav Volf

### RELATED MOVIES:

*Ushpizin* (2004) – Gidi Dar - New Line Home Entertainment

*Return to Me* (2000) – Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer

## VIDEOS:

Visit [ahumc.org/stars](http://ahumc.org/stars) for links to videos.



## NOTES

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



# SPIRIT

*We are never alone.*



Our story and our experience tells us there is something about God that is as close to us as our very breath and yet as mysterious and dynamic as the wind. We call that the Spirit of God, and we believe that it fuels, guides, and unites all existence.

**What are we talking about when we talk about the Spirit?** \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

**What connection do you feel to something bigger than yourself?** \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

**What questions do you have about the Spirit?** \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

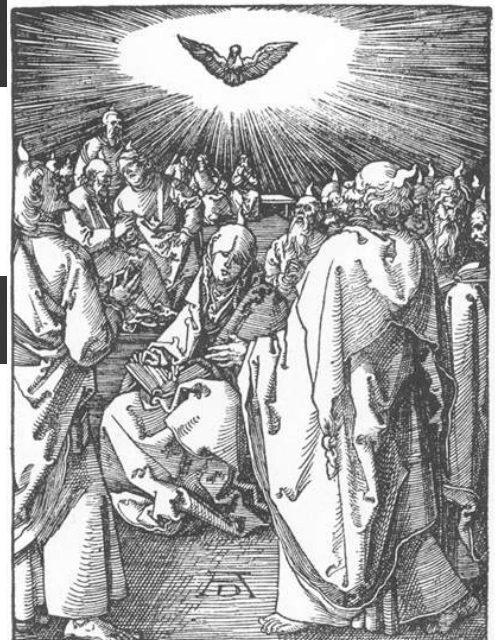
---

## ART CORNER

*The Descent of the Holy Spirit (1511)*  
Albrecht Durer  
1471-1528

## ACTS 2:32-33

*This Jesus, God raised up. And every one of us here is a witness to it. Then, raised to the heights at the right hand of God and receiving the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father, he poured out the Spirit he had just received. That is what you see and hear.*



## RESOURCES

### KEY BIBLICAL TEXTS:

## Genesis 2:7 – God breathes the *ruach* into humanity

Exodus 31:1-11 – *Bezalel is filled with the divine spirit*

### Ezekiel 37:1-14 – *The valley of dry bones*

### John 20:19-23 – *Jesus breathes on the disciples*

## Acts 2 – The Spirit is poured out at Pentecost / *Shavuot*

## HELPFUL BOOKS:

*The Divine Dance: The Trinity and Your Transformation* by Richard Rohr

*Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God* by Dallas Willard

*Big Magic: Creative Living Beyond Fear* by Elizabeth Gilbert

## RELATED MOVIES:

*The Shack* (2017) – Gil Netter Productions

*Wish I was Here* (2014) – Worldview Entertainment

## VIDEOS:

Visit [ahumc.org/stars](http://ahumc.org/stars) for links to videos.



## NOTES

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

# MISSION

*Partnering with God.*



Partnering with God to bring the Kingdom of Heaven to Earth  
by making disciples of Jesus Christ.

**What inspires you to follow someone?** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Describe a partnership in which you've participated.** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**What are you in charge of?** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

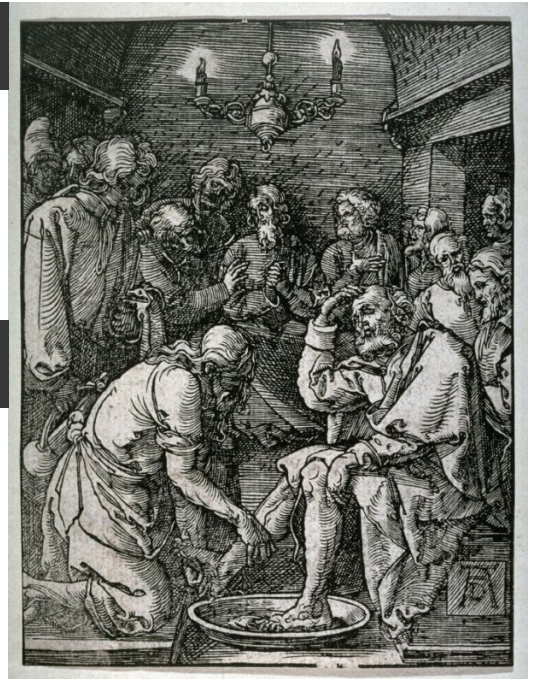
\_\_\_\_\_

## ART CORNER

*Christ Washing the Feet of the Disciples (1511)*  
Albrecht Durer  
1471-1528

## JOHN 13:14-15

*So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you  
also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you  
an example, that you also should do as I have done to  
you. 8hRK*





## RESOURCES

### KEY BIBLICAL TEXTS:

Isaiah 61:1-2	The Spirit of the LORD is upon me
Matthew 6:33	Seek first the Kingdom of God
Matthew 28:16-20	As you go, make disciples
Luke 11:2-4	The LORD's Prayer
I Corinthians 11:1	Follow me as I follow Christ

## HELPFUL BOOKS:

*Simply Jesus: A New Vision of Who He Was, What He Did, and Why He Matters* by N.T. Wright  
*Heart and Mind: The Four-Gospel Journey for Radical Transformation* by Alexander Shaia  
*We Make the Road by Walking: A Year-Long Quest for Spiritual Formation, Reorientation, and Activation*  
 by Brian McLaren

## RELATED MOVIES:

*Les Misérables* (2012) – Working Title Films  
*The Legend of Bagger Vance* (2000) – Allied Filmmakers

## VIDEOS:

Visit [ahumc.org/stars](http://ahumc.org/stars) for links to videos.



## NOTES

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

# AHUMC MAP

