



THE FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH CONNECTIONS

First United Methodist Church

Mexia, Texas

August, 2007

... *“You’ve Got To Be Kidding Me!”*

“Now when Jesus saw great crowds around him, he gave orders to go over to the other side. A scribe then approached and said, ‘Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.’ Another of his disciples said to him, ‘Lord, first let me go and bury my father.’ But Jesus said to him, ‘Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead.’” Matthew 8:18-22

My six-year old son has a new saying: “You’ve got to be kidding me!” Depending on how he says it and when he says it determines whether or not I laugh, but most of the time I think it’s funny when he makes the comment “You’ve got to be kidding me!” I think I would say much the same thing about Jesus’ remarks to those who wanted to follow him. He basically said to the scribe who wanted to follow, “Look, I don’t think you have what it takes. Besides that, we will not be staying at the Hilton.” Then he said to another would-be follower, “If you are more concerned with burying your father than following me, then hit the highway. The bus leaves right now with or without you.” You’ve got to be kidding me! Was Jesus serious?

One thing is for sure, Jesus wanted complete and total commitment from his followers. I believe the same is true for us today. Yes, Jesus loves me, but Jesus also expects something of me. When we join a United Methodist church we are asked the following question: “Will you support this United Methodist congregation with your prayers, your presence, your gifts, and your service?” Then we say, “Yes”, whether we understand it or not. I believe we need to be more specific in what it means to be a member of First United Methodist Church Mexia. What do we mean when we say support this church with your prayers, presence, gifts, and service?

Here is what it means to be a member of FUMC Mexia:

1. Worship regularly -- We are not here to worship ourselves, but to worship God. Can you think of anything more important than worshipping our Creator and Savior?
2. Pray -- We will pray for our church and one another.
3. Service -- We will volunteer our time to serve either locally or abroad. This can range from cleaning up in the kitchen after a pot-luck to going on a mission trip. All of us are called to be hands-on in our faith.
4. Study -- We will participate in at least one small-group to further our spiritual development. This can include Sunday School, small group Bible studies, etc.
5. Gifts -- God calls each of us to be faithful stewards of all that God has given us. We will give proportionately and work towards God’s model of a tithe (10%).

From this point forward anyone interested in becoming a member of FUMC Mexia will covenant to do the five things listed above. On Sunday, September 9th during our 10:30 a.m. worship service current members will have the opportunity to recommit to the church by covenanting to worship regularly, pray for the church, volunteer through hands-on ministry, participate in some small-group, and give regularly and faithfully.

I hope you are proud to be a member of this great church and will continue to grow in your faith.

In Christ,

Brad

******Our Mission Statement******

The mission of FUMC Mexia is to make and grow disciples of
Jesus Christ and bear fruit for the Kingdom of God.

In our thoughts and prayers...

Eddie Chrisner Judy Crider Garrett Ferguson Marty Ferguson
Noreeta Lane Bonnie Pacher Melissa Siller Faye Tacker T.G. Temples
James & Merl Shivers Dorothy Vinson Elizabeth Withrow

Our American Troops in Iraq

Message from Youth Director Walt Harrison....

Well here we are in the last month of the summer. Boy did it go by fast. I don't know about you but I have not completed all the "summer" projects I had intended to do. As we frantically get all of our ducks in a row let's take time to get right with God before we do anything. Let's make it our goal to ask God for guidance in all our tasks whether we like the task or not. If we can include God in our plans he will reveal his plan for us which believe it or not includes all aspects of our life! He can make these hectic times of the year seem like a stroll in the park. We have several events scheduled during the month of August. Please see the calendar on page 8.

Parents, I have had the opportunity to meet most of you but I would like the opportunity to spend some time getting to know you better. I would like to meet with you on the 29th of Aug at 6:45 pm. I will give you a schedule of the fall activities and show you a place where you can help. If your child is not in the group, but will be promoted on the 9th of September I would like for you to attend this meeting as well.

I would like to leave you with this story I came across some time ago: A mother, wishing to encourage her son's progress at the piano, bought tickets to a performance by the great Polish pianist Ignacio Paderewski. When the evening arrived, they found their seats near the front of the concert hall and eyed the majestic Steinway waiting on the stage. Soon the mother found a friend to talk to, and the boy slipped away.

At eight o'clock, the lights in the auditorium began to dim, the spotlights came on, and only then did they notice the boy - up on the piano bench, innocently picking out "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star." His mother gasped in shock and embarrassment but, before she could retrieve her son, the master himself appeared on the stage and quickly moved to the keyboard.

He whispered gently to the boy, "Don't quit. Keep playing." Leaning over, Paderewski reached down with his left hand and began filling in the bass part. Soon his right arm reached around the other side and improvised a delightful obbligato. Together, the old master and the young novice held the crowd mesmerized with their blended and beautiful music.

In all our lives, we receive helping hands - some we notice, some we don't. Equally we ourselves have countless opportunities to provide helping hands - sometimes we would like our assistance to be noticed, sometimes we don't. Little of what we all achieve is without learning from others and without support from others and what we receive we should hand out.

I call upon all of our church family to be helping hands to our youth. All of us have things that we can do to help but they are no good if you don't use them! May God Bless our Youth, Parents, Church, and community.

In Christ,
Walt

Message from Christian Education/Program Coordinator—Charlotte Posey...

Do you get excited just anticipating an upcoming trip that you are about to take? I enjoy the planning, making the reservations, looking at the travel brochures and imagining what I will experience on my trip. It's great fun to anticipate all that the journey will bring. And it's even more fun when others come along on the trip with you. Well, our church is about to take such a trip.

It's a spiritual journey that you won't want to miss. The series is called "Companions in Christ." This is not a Bible study but rather a journey of spiritual formation. Together we will discover how to feed our spiritual hunger and satisfy our restless souls. Maybe you've wondered if there isn't something more to the Christian faith but you don't know how to obtain it.

Our church body will divide into small groups and engage in a six-week study called, "Exploring the Way." Together we will grow in some common spiritual practices such as prayer, journaling, meditating with scripture, and learning some "listening to God skills."

If you have ever wanted to be part of a small core group that explored questions and issues of faith but were uncertain and maybe a little anxious about the dynamics of being part of a small group, this 6 week journey is for you. Rest assured that you will feel comfortable as you participate in this setting.

More information will be forthcoming. In the meantime, get ready for a journey that will certainly change your life and bring you closer to our Lord.

Message from Children's Coordinator Cheryl Hancock...

The Peacekeepers have had a wonderful summer and are ready to get back together with their weekly group and ringers group. We are looking forward to our new members joining us and our older members moving on to the Junior High youth group. We will have one final field trip before school starts on August 11, we will be going to Waco to Play Putt-Putt golf and have lunch at Cameron Park.

FUMC LIBRARY NOTES

There are many new books in our FUMC library. They are available for you to check out for your reading enjoyment and information.

Charles Stanley's – **The Wonderful Spirit Filled Life**

Dave Dravecky's – **The Worth of a Man**

As a major league pitcher, Dave, was devastated when he lost his arm and shoulder to cancer. God helped him find another career.

Jeanette McFarlin's – **God and The Little Blue Bear**

An autobiography, Mrs. McFarlin tells how God helped her raise her children, including our very own Linda Fox, a wonderful musician!

Karen S. Linamen's – **Sometimes I Wake Up Grumpy, and Sometimes I Let Him Sleep**

There are many more great books to check out, so go by and find a good book to read.

If a check out card is not in a book, find a slip of paper to record your name, the book title, and the date, and put it in the box on the cabinet please.

Thanks to those who have donated books, tapes, etc. There are quite a few children's and teen-age books for our younger family members to enjoy.

Update on A/C and Heating Program

I wanted to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has participated in our drive to raise funds to replace our A/C and Heating units in the sanctuary and fellowship hall. So far we have \$43,321 committed to the project, with \$10,907 in hand. Again, you have stepped up when presented with a need in the church and I thank you for your faithful stewardship. If you have not committed to this project and would like to do so, we have commitment cards in the office and would love for you to participate.

McCurdy Mission Trip

A group of seven adults from our church went to Espanola, New Mexico the first week of July to work at McCurdy School. McCurdy School is a Christian school in the Espanola Valley. Our group joined 35 other volunteers from various churches in our conference. We had a great time not only working at the school, but getting to know one another better. Next year we will be going to McCurdy the week of July 5th. Later in the fall we will have a dinner and slide show with pictures from our trip and will answer any questions you have about the McCurdy School. We look forward to taking more volunteers from our church and would love to have you be part of the group.

Sunday School

One of the areas we would like our church to grow in is Sunday School. Sunday School is a great opportunity to grow in our faith, as well as get connected with others in the church. We have Sunday School for children and adults and will be starting new classes this fall. All classes begin at 9:30 a.m. If you are not currently involved in Sunday School and would like a list of classes and topics, contact the church office and we will be glad to assist you.

Mission Team

We are in the process of developing a mission team. This would be a group of volunteers who get together to plan mission opportunities for our congregation. This group would not only participate in mission projects, especially on the local level, but would be responsible for involving more of our congregation in local mission outreach. One example would be organizing a group from our church to work on a Habitat House. We will have an organizational meeting on **Wednesday, August 8th at 6:00 p.m.** in the boardroom. Come with your ideas and we will get to work.

Administrative Board Meeting

Our next Administrative Board meeting will be **Thursday, August 23rd at 7:00 p.m.** The Administrative Board consists of every member of the church and every member has voting privileges. The purpose of our Board meeting is to inform the congregation of the different ministries and programs of the church, as well as approve major projects. We have several smaller, specific committees that handle many of the day to day operations of the church. We like to keep our Board meetings to an hour in length and focus on celebrating our ministry together. Every member is welcome and encouraged to attend. If you are currently visiting the church and not a member yet, you are invited as well to learn more about the church and how to get involved.

New Worship Service

Beginning **Wednesday, September 5th** we will offer a 6:00 p.m. worship service. This service will follow our 5:00 p.m. supper and will be informal. The service will consist of lots of singing, prayer, a teaching style sermon (short!), and communion every week. If you know of anyone who is unable to worship on Sunday mornings due to work or other reasons, invite them to this service. The service will be approximately 45 minutes in length to allow for our members to attend Bible studies, choir, youth, etc.

Ministry Commitment Fair – Sunday, September 9th

On Sunday, September 9th we will have a Ministry Commitment Fair at the conclusion of our 10:30 a.m. worship service. The different ministry areas of our church (youth, children, adult small groups, missions, Preschool, visitation, etc.) will have booths set up in the foyer with information about how you can get involved and volunteer. Our emphasis and theme for the fall is “Moving From Membership to Discipleship”. In other words, as members of Christ’s church we are called to serve in one way or another. This Ministry Fair is an excellent way of plugging in and getting involved. If you are involved in a particular ministry of this church and would like to have a booth to share information, contact the church office.

Singing to Discipleship—join the Chancel Choir!

August signals new beginnings. The new school year begins; we buy new clothes and supplies in preparation; students in college buy new textbooks for new courses; in our jobs, we often are able to begin new projects.

In many ways, the life of the church mirrors the larger culture. Now that most vacations are over, and we resume our somewhat normal schedules, we are able to begin new things.

Chancel Choir rehearsals for adults will resume on Wednesday, August 8 at 7 p.m. It always takes time to prepare for the “new beginnings” reflected in our upcoming worship services: Promotion Sunday on August 26, marking new Sunday School classes as well as the opening of the school year; and Commitment Sunday on September 9, as we renew our choices of ministry in the church. We hope to provide music that will help celebrate those days, so we begin our preparation a month early.

If you have considered joining the choir in the past, I hope you will consider joining this faithful (in many ways) band of volunteers. We sing together, we pray and worship together, we laugh together, and we learn together. Some of us are highly trained in music, but some of us can’t read a note of music. You don’t even have to read music to sing in choir. You would be surprised at how easy it is to learn a part and sing new music—it’s not rocket science!

Come join us on August 8 as we prepare to enhance the worship life of our band of disciples.

Handbells: Ringing to Discipleship!

Handbell choir rehearsals will resume in September—watch for dates and times. In addition to the adult Chancel Ringers and the 4-5 grade Peacekeepers Ringers, we will begin a Youth Handbell Choir with those who graduated from Peacekeepers this year as well as other interested youth—watch for additional announcements.

This summer, we sent our set of 3-octave handbells off to be refurbished. They had reached an age where certain parts were deteriorating and causing problems. They are now back from South Carolina, and are absolutely gorgeous. We look forward to using them to enhance our worship services. A couple of adults have expressed an interest in learning to play handbells. There is a possibility of beginning a new handbell group for adult beginners. If you would like to participate, please let Richard know.

Spirit and Arts Concert Series at FUMC

This fall the Music Ministry at FUMC will present a monthly Sunday evening performance series, tentatively titled *Spirit and Arts*. This series will offer a variety of styles, from instrumental to vocal, classical to popular, sacred to secular (but with a spiritual bent), featuring local and imported talent. While a couple of events are still being negotiated, we can tell you that we will feature a country Christian artist, and a youth handbell choir from Oklahoma (the director is an important figure in the handbell world). The February concert will be a President’s Day Concert of patriotic and American music presented by our Chancel Choir and friends from the community. In May we will host the Bistone Methodist Choir festival, inviting choirs from Limestone and Freestone counties to come together and present their favorite anthems, then sing a couple of anthems together. Watch for more information as plans are firmed up.

August Birthdays

1st—Harlon Brady, 4th—John Irwin, 8th—R.J. Weaver, 10th—Leslie Clements, 11th—Brad Brittain, Walt Harrison, 12th— Woody Woodruff, 14th—Kristen Allen, 15th—Tim Edwards, Arnold Gray, Kortney Kelsey, Bob Ray, 16th—Donna Woodruff, 17th—Donna Findley, Randy Machacek, 19th—Craig Kegerreis, 21st—Bennie Flatt, Karen Harrison, 26th—Lillie Mae Atkins, Ima Burroughs, 31st—Bill Ward, Cliff Williams

August Anniversaries

6th—Cliff & Frances Williams, 7th—Becky and Harlon Brady, 8th—George & Jackie Tidwell, 9th—Walt & Karen Harrison, 14th—Billy & Louise Howze, 15th—John & Charlotte Posey, 20th—Kyle & Cheryl Hancock, 25th—Bob & Emile Ray, 26th— Doug & Kristen Allen, 27th—Randy & Ginger Kott, 31st—Larry & Sandy Hensley



Dear Mustard Seed Class and Parents:

2007 Kindergarteners Mustard Seed Class: Blayke Russ, Payton Wallitsch, Alex McCulloch, Samantha Wright, Jacob Allen, Jackson Tacker, Jordan Hullum

Other Mustard Seed Class Members: Cash Ellis, Elijah Nance, Reid Rogers, Trinity Edwards, Malachi Nance, Andrew Brittain

Sunday, August 26 is going to be a special day for the Children’s Sunday School Department and we want you to all come be a part of this “Celebration of the Sunday School”! On this Sunday ALL of you will be recognized in church as members of this special class. Church starts at 10:30 am. Sunday School is at 9:30 am. Those children who will be entering Kindergarten this year will get a special promotion certificate. On that Sunday, we will go visit the Elementary Class which you Kindergarteners will start attending on Sunday, Sept. 2. It will be great fun to go see the new class and new teachers which you will love as you enter the Elementary class at FUMC.

Matthew 17:20 says: “ ... if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to the mountain, ‘Move from here to there’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you”

The children in this Mustard Seed class are a blessing to our church and they are our future. We celebrate each precious life and want them to know that they belong to Jesus Christ and are welcome in God’s church and in our Sunday School. Please come on Sunday, August 26 for Promotion Sunday and then keep coming to be a regular part of Sunday School at First United Methodist Church.

Yours in Christ,
Sherry Miller

MUSTARD SEED CLASS LOOKING FOR TEACHER

Our youngest Sunday School Class is currently looking for a teacher to begin in September. This age group is 3 to 5 year olds and meets in the Peyton Building in a downstairs toddler classroom from 9:30 – 10:15. There are nursery workers on hand to assist with the smallest ones and also to keep any babies that might be present in the baby room.

Jesus tells us in Matthew 13:31-32 that the kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed. He talks about the mustard seed being among the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows; it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a large tree. It is truly a blessing to be part of the spiritual growth of these precious little ones in the Mustard Seed Class. If you might be interested in teaching this class, please call Sherry Miller, 562-7822. This experience is truly a blessing.

<p><u>Welcome Our Newest Members</u> Jade Candy Doug & Kristen, Jacob, and Payton Allen Bobbie Lou Turrentine</p> <p><u>Welcome Back</u> Benjamin, Shawna, Hunter, Madison and Makaleigh Lane</p>	<p><u>Attendance in June</u></p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th style="text-align: center;"><u>SS</u></th> <th style="text-align: center;"><u>Worship</u></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>6/3</td> <td style="text-align: center;">43</td> <td style="text-align: center;">126</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6/10</td> <td style="text-align: center;">43</td> <td style="text-align: center;">119</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6/17</td> <td style="text-align: center;">52</td> <td style="text-align: center;">131</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6/25</td> <td style="text-align: center;">46</td> <td style="text-align: center;">107</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		<u>SS</u>	<u>Worship</u>	6/3	43	126	6/10	43	119	6/17	52	131	6/25	46	107	<p><u>Attendance in July</u></p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th style="text-align: center;"><u>SS</u></th> <th style="text-align: center;"><u>Worship</u></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>7/1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">51</td> <td style="text-align: center;">100</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7/8</td> <td style="text-align: center;">57</td> <td style="text-align: center;">126</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7/15</td> <td style="text-align: center;">No SS</td> <td style="text-align: center;">94</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7/22</td> <td style="text-align: center;">49</td> <td style="text-align: center;">130</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7/29</td> <td style="text-align: center;">50</td> <td style="text-align: center;">130</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		<u>SS</u>	<u>Worship</u>	7/1	51	100	7/8	57	126	7/15	No SS	94	7/22	49	130	7/29	50	130
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<p><u>Bobbie Pendelton Memorials</u> Lillie Mae Atkins Buddy & Donna Williford Carl & Jean Williford Lady Carter & Bob Fain Roy & Bobbie Baccus</p>	<p><u>Additional Memorials</u> Chris Williford Sallie Ramsey Steven Henderson Buddy & Donna Williford Frances & Cliff Williams Virginia Oliver Sallie Ramsey Kenneth Trout Jimmy & Diana Bradley</p>	<p>Deadline for submitting an article for the September Connections is August 23rd.</p>
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ATTENTION ALL MEN!

It's time to show your talent in the kitchen. We will be having a Men's Cake Bake-off contest on Sunday, August 26 after church. No assistance from your lovely wives, fellows! You are on your own. You will bake your cake at home and bring it to church with you on August 26th. The fun begins following the service with a church-wide lunch. Taco salad will be served. Following lunch, the judging of the cakes will begin. Here are the categories to be judged:

Most Unusual—Ugliest—Most Beautiful—Best Tasting—Most Layers

Prizes will be awarded for each category. Please let us know in the office that you are entering the contest. We will be asking the ladies to bring some good ole' homemade ice-cream for all to enjoy. If you would like to hang around after the judging and play dominoes, card or board games, bring your game of choice. We are looking forward to an afternoon of fun, laughter, and fellowship.

Dear FUMC,

Thank you so much for awarding me the scholarship. It will be very helpful towards my educational endeavor of becoming a teacher.

I have been a member of this church my whole life & it has played an important role in my life. Thanks for being there for me & thanks again for awarding me this scholarship!

Love always!

Molly Kay Goodrum

Important dates for our youth:

Wednesday, August 1st—5-7:45p.m.—Swimming at Mexia City Pool Snacks and drinks provided

Saturday, August 4th—7:40 am—Trip to Dallas with First Baptist Church, broom ball and ice skating.

Meet at First Baptist Church and return home around 8 pm

Wednesday, August 8th—5:30 pm— Pastor cooking hotdogs

Wednesday, August 15th—5:30 pm—Youth Planning

Wednesday, August 22nd—5:30pm—Regular Youth Meeting

Saturday, August 25th—1-8:00 pm—Back to school bash at Craig and Linda Kegerreis home

Wednesday, August 29th—5:30pm—Regular Youth meeting followed by parents meeting at 6:45.

All parents required to attend.

Your Church Staff

Brad Brittain, Pastor

Dr. Richard Morgan, Director of Music

Walt Harrison, Minister of Youth

Cheryl Hancock, Children's Coordinator

Charlotte Posey, Christian Education/Program Coordinator

Wynona Lipsett, Organist

Mary Benson, Administrative Assistant/Fiscal Coordinator

Lowell Posey, Building Maintenance

Office Hours

Monday-Thursday

8:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. - 1:00 -4:00 p.m.

Friday—9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Office 254-562-5567

Brad's Cell: 254-625-2435