

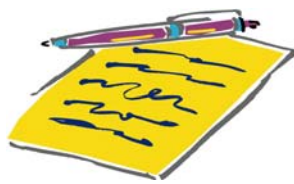


THE FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH CONNECTIONS

First United Methodist Church

Mexia, Texas

August, 2008



... *“Do You Still Dream?”*

In his book *“11”* Leonard Sweet wrote about the novel *“The Alchemist”*. Paulo Coelho tells a compelling story about a young boy who is learning to follow his heart. The boy travels through the desert alongside a man who is simply identified as “the alchemist.” As they journey the boy engages in a conversation with his heart. He learns that he, like everyone else, has a treasure waiting for him, and the heart’s purpose is to encourage him to seek that treasure. But because people become preoccupied with so many other things, they no longer pay attention to their hearts. Only children, who have yet to be so distracted by life, have the ability to hear their hearts in a clear way. The boy learns from the alchemist that because of the pain of going unheard, the heart will eventually stop telling people to follow their dreams. The boy pleads with his heart to never stop speaking to him. Should he begin to wander away from his dreams, he wants his heart to sound the alarm and promises he will hear it and follow.



It is so easy to become distracted with the day to day things we all deal with and forget that God wants us to dream and think beyond the ordinary. If you are like me some days you just want to get through the day in one piece! Forget about dreaming and thinking big, let’s just see if we can make it to Friday! Remember that we were not created to live week-to-week to simply “get by”. We were created to have life and have it more abundantly in Christ. I’m not a fan of motivational posters or bumper stickers but I saw one the other day that really meant something. It said, “Life is not defined by the breaths you take, but by the moments that take your breath away.” This week as you do the regular day to day things – shopping, taking care of kids, caring for parents, going to work, going to the doctor – don’t forget to dream because sometimes our dreams are the only things that remind us of who we really are and more importantly, what we can become.

In Christ,

Brad

Message from Program Coordinator Charlotte Posey...

Knit Together Ministry is going great and we have given 15 prayer shawls away to date. Ardys Irwin is a wonderful, patient teacher. We are having new members continue to join us so if any of you are interested in learning to knit or crochet, please come any Thursday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. We would love to have you and we supply all of the materials you will need. It's so much fun to come and visit, laugh, and be a part of this ministry every week. Come and try us out. We have between 25-30 members presently and on the last Thursday of the month we have a "pot Luck" luncheon.

Also, if anyone is interested in coming to an evening group, please let me know. We have several who have asked and we would like to start an evening group of knitters. I can be contacted at 625-0550 or call the church office.

Message from Preschool Director Sherry Miller....

Another Great Summer at FMP

We are winding down from another great summer at First Methodist Preschool. The children have enjoyed all the special activities and sports clinics. We are currently completing participation in the Gibbs Library Summer Reading Program. The week of July 21st we had our splash days and concluded the week with our Beach Party Summer Musical, "Surfin' Through the Scriptures". Thirty five school age children sang and danced for their parents at a luncheon musical on Friday, July 28th.

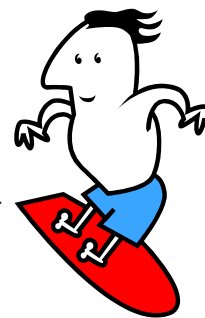
Now we get ready for August and Fall enrollment and planning for a great school year. Our fall term starts on August 25th (the same as public school) and we are currently enrolling children and hiring a few new staff.

We look forward to Alisha Brittain joining us in August as Literacy and Reading Readiness specialist. Recently we welcomed Lisa Paul to our staff as part time office assistant to help with some of the accounting and payroll programs.

We love our new "blue floor" – come see it! More building upkeep and improvements are needed and in the planning stages. As always, we welcome our members, family and friends to come visit any time.

Vacation Bible School

This year our Vacation Bible School will have a new look!! We are planning a Weekend Vacation Bible School! It will begin on Friday evening, August 15th, from 5:30 p.m.-8:00 p.m., and continue on Saturday, August 16th, from 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., ending with a pool party at the city pool from 8 p.m.-10 p.m. The theme this year is Surfin' Through the Scriptures with craft, recreation, snack, Bible story time, discovery time, music and worship time. VBS is open to 4 year olds to 5th grade.



If you would like to be involved as a worker we would love to have you participate--just contact the church office, Sherry Miller, Jackie Tidwell, Pam Crider, or Alisha Britton.

News from our Youth Leaders, Gael, Jill & Kortney...

Summertime is supposed to be relaxed and laid back, but the youth are continuing in high gear. A van load of youth went to the Rangers game on Monday, June 2nd, then headed to Waco on June 14th to play paint ball. The following Saturday, they had a fun afternoon at Lake Mexia at Cass and Kellie Candy's home. It was a perfect day for swimming and water-sliding, and eating hamburgers and hot dogs.

In addition to the fun times, the youth have engaged in several work projects, including cleaning the church windows and clearing out the flower bed by the fellowship hall. On June 25th, the youth went to Mrs. Collinsworth's house to clean up her yard and carport.

The youth meet each Wednesday from 5:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. After sharing supper, they break into Junior and Senior High groups for Bible study and discussion. They usually end with a time of recreation and "hanging out". During the summer, the youth are also involved in performing service projects and invite church members to submit requests to the church office for work such as yard clean up, junk hauling, etc.

On July 2nd, the youth went to the Mexia City Pool for a swim night. On July 16th, Brad and Alisha invited the youth to the parsonage for hamburgers and hot dogs. (Brad even did the cooking.) Other activities being considered this summer are bowling, roller skating and having a lock-in and movie night.

The youth M&M (Mission and Ministry) fundraiser continues to be a success. To date, they have collected \$688.55. Remember to turn in your M&M tubes to the youth on Sundays or Wednesdays, and if you'd like another tube of candy, they'd be happy to give you one. What a sweet way to support the youth!

It's wonderful to have so many youth excited about gathering together in the name of the Lord. They continue to learn and grow in faith as well as fellowship with other believers.

Thank You

Thanks to the wonderful group of young people who performed miracles in my yard, flower beds and garage. Imagine my utter surprise when I opened the door expecting to see one young man and instead saw Cox's army in my yard. They all worked effectively and fast, accomplishing much more than I expected. The group is to be commended for their diligence and hard work. My deepest thanks and appreciation go to this fine group and their sponsors.

God Bless,
Ruth Collinsworth



Stephen Ministry Sunday August 3rd

Sunday, August 3rd will be a big Sunday in the life of our church. During the 10:30 a.m. worship service we will be commissioning Donna Williford and Pam Crider to serve as Stephen Ministers in our congregation. The Stephen's Ministry program is a ministry of caring that Donna and Pam are now trained to bring to our church. Later that same day there will be an informational meeting at 7:00 p.m. in the Board Room to provide information on how to become a Stephen's Minister in our congregation. Donna and Pam have been trained to lead the course in our church and are asking that anyone interested in learning more about how to become a Stephen's Minister come to the meeting. Our goal is to have several members of our church trained by the end of the year so we can begin matching Stephen Ministers with those in need of care. Congratulations Donna and Pam!

Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University

On Monday, August 11th at 6:30 p.m. we will have our first Financial Peace University class. Financial Peace is led by Dave Ramsey and is a course in personal finances. The course covers topics such as: savings, budgeting, understanding investments and insurance, college planning, retirement planning, real estate, stewardship and giving, etc. This is an excellent course that has changed the lives of people all around the country. Alisha Brittain and Karen Harrison will be leading the course. If you are interested in attending the course, contact the church office at 254-562-5567. There will be an orientation meeting on Monday, August 4th at 6 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

FUMC "Mexia International Food Festival"

This fall our church will be having an "International Food Festival". The idea is to have different booths set up that represent various cultures and foods from around the world. For this project we would like our whole church to be involved and would love to get your input at our organizational meeting on **Thursday, August 21st at 6:00 p.m.** Diane Burks has information that she will be sharing on how to organize and prepare for an event such as this. Just as we have all pulled and worked together for our Fall Festivals in the past, we hope this event will produce the same kind of participation and cooperation. See you on the 21st with your ideas!

Mexia ISD Appreciation Luncheon

On Friday, August 22nd the Mexia Chamber of Commerce is sponsoring a luncheon in honor of employees at Mexia ISD. We have offered to provide dessert for the meal. There will be two meals -- one at 11:30 a.m. and one at 12:30 p.m. This is a great way for our church to show our appreciation for the employees who work in our school district. We are needing as many homemade cakes, cookies, pies, brownies, etc. as possible. If you would like to help bake for this project and/or help serve at the luncheon itself, contact Charlotte Posey at 254-625-0550.

BBQ Cook-Off !!!

Our church will be hosting a BBQ Cook-Off on **Saturday, August 23rd at 6:00 p.m.** If you would like to enter the competition simply call the church office and get on the list. Here are the categories that will be judged: brisket, sausage, ribs, and chicken. We will have prizes for all four categories. In addition to the BBQ provided by those entering the competition, we would like for church members to sign up to bring various side dishes for our meal (potato salad, coleslaw, beans, desserts, etc.). Like the fish fry that we hosted in the spring, this is simply a fun time of fellowship that is free for everyone. We would like for every member to bring at least two guests to the cook-off. Get your recipes ready and come with an appetite!

Wednesday Suppers/Programs

We will be resuming our Wednesday evening suppers on **Wednesday, September 3rd at 5:00 p.m.** Supper will be served from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. In addition to supper on Wednesdays, we will have a wide variety of programs for children and adults. Later in August we will have more specific information as to what will be offered in the way of Bible studies, children's programs, music programs, etc.

Wonderful Wednesdays

Special thanks go out to all the volunteers who have made our Wonderful Wednesday children's program this summer a great success. The children have really enjoyed getting together and having the opportunity to learn about God's creation, both here in Mexia and in other locations. The group has gone to Jackie Tidwell's home, the Mayborn Museum in Waco, and the fish hatchery in Athens. Upcoming trips will include the Cooke Center in Corsicana where they'll explore God's sky and then we will close the program by a visit to our very own Ft. Parker. We look forward to continuing our fun this summer with our Vacation Bible School!

Landscaping Project

One of our goals for this year is to improve the landscaping/appearance of our outside grounds at the church. In an effort to do just that, plans are underway to begin landscaping in September. We are in the process of implementing a three-phase plan that will improve the appearance of our church. Our goal is to raise \$15,000 (\$100 per family in the church). We are seeking to raise \$5000 by September 1st to begin phase 1 of the project. If you would like to contribute to the project, simply make a check to FUMC Mexia – Memo: Landscaping. Any amount you are able to contribute would be greatly appreciated and would go a long way in improving our grounds. We will have landscape drawings available later this month.

News from United Methodist Women...

The Recuperative Powers of Reading is the title for an enjoyable Sunday afternoon program of tea and cookies. Come join us!



First United Methodist Church invites the public to a Tea and Book Review on Sunday afternoon, **August 3rd, 2008 at 2:30 p.m.** Kathy Morgan will provide highlights from *The Uncommon Reader* written by Alan Bennett. Then, she will introduce the audience to snippets of information about each of the books that she was given to read while recuperating from surgery.



Thanks!!

A year ago my carelessness changed my active lifestyle. It has been a very long year of recovery from my defiance of God's law of "Gravity". So many of you through your prayers, cards, visits, and encouragement have helped me return to a near normal life, or as near normal as I ever was or will be.



Thanks so much for your friendship,
Craig Kegerreis

Thank You!



New Life Class and Friends,

Lane and I will never forget all the things you have done for us. You are unbelievable. Thank you for cleaning the gutters, cutting trees, trimming shrubs, washing the fence, painting the fence, pulling weeds, cleaning the barn, back hoeing dead trees, painting lattés, making a new road, sanding and staining the door, pulling weeds, buying plants and everything else you've done to help us get ready for Lane's wedding. We thank God for you. We have been blessed!

Thank you!
Ann Neill

Choir Practice Notice

For FUMC Choir Members: Please note that practice will resume on Wednesday, August 13th at 7 p.m.



August Birthdays

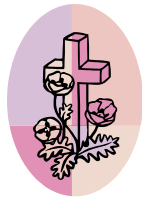
1st—Harlon Brady, 4th—John Irwin, 8th—R.J. Weaver,
10th—Leslie Clements, 11th—Brad Brittain, Walt Harrison,
12th—Woody Woodruff, 14th—Kristen Allen, 15th—Tim Edwards,
Arnold Gray, Kortney Kelsey, Bob Ray, 16th—Donna Woodruff,
17th—Donna Findley, Randy Machacek, 19th—Craig Kegerreis,
21st—Bennie Green, Karen Harrison, 26th—Lillie Mae Atkins, Ima
Burroughs, 29th—Ann Burgoon, 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 & Emilie Ray,
26th—Doug & Kristen Allen, 27th—Randy & Ginger Kott,
31st—Larry & Sandy Hensley



Memorial

John Morgan

Joe & Kathy Paschal,
Mike & Valerie Bolton

Educational Supply Outreach

We are going to have a program to gather school supplies for children in our Community. A few examples of the types of supplies are:

- 3 ring zippered notebooks (large)
- 4 packs of expo markers
- We are also looking at uniform shirts, pants and belts



Please keep your eyes open for our inserts in Sunday's Bulletin and the Church's emails.

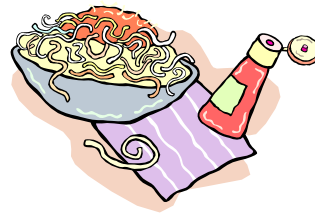
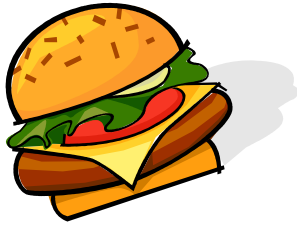
For more detailed information contact Valerie Bolton or Tammy McCulloch.

WHAT A DEAL

Where can you go to get a home cooked meal for \$3.00 per person or \$10.00 per family?
 Wednesday nights at 5:00-6:00 pm at the First United Methodist Church – that’s where.

We will start serving dinner on Wednesday night September 3rd. The following menu is for
 September. What is better than having fellowship with a meal and at a reasonable price?

- 9/03 Hamburgers
- 9/10 Taco Salad
- 9/17 Chicken Spaghetti
- 9/24 Sloppy Joe’s



<u>Sunday Worship attendance for July:</u>	
7/06	91
7/13	105
7/20	138
7/20	165

<p><u>August 25th</u></p> <p>Deadline for the September Connections Newsletter</p>
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Your Church Staff

- Brad Brittain, Pastor
- Dr. Richard Morgan, Director of Music
- Charlotte Posey, Christian Education/Program Coordinator
- Wynona Lipsett, Organist
- Mary Benson, Administrative Assistant/Fiscal Coordinator
- Mike Bolton, Building Maintenance

Office Hours
 Monday-Thursday
 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. - 1:00 –4:00 p.m.
 Friday
 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.