

## THE FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH CONNECTIONS

First United Methodist Church

Mexia, Texas

August, 2009



... *“Costly Grace.....”*

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a German pastor / theologian during WWII. He participated in an underground movement to overthrow Hitler and was subsequently arrested. Bonhoeffer was executed during the final days of WWII by the Nazis. Needless to say, he knew a thing or two about sacrifice and standing up for what was right. He also knew the meaning of grace and that God’s grace was not something to be taken lightly. Here is what he had to say about grace and discipleship:

“Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ living and incarnate. Costly grace is the gospel which must be sought again and again. The gift which must be asked for, the door at which one must knock. Such grace is costly because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. It is costly because it costs us our lives. It is grace because it gives us the only true life.”

Our society is one where we expect to have the best things in life without working for them or valuing them. Unfortunately, that same attitude is present in our churches. At some point all of us “want” certain things in our church and expect certain things from our church, but are we ready to sacrifice to make those things happen? Just as Christ offered us costly grace, we too must understand that the greatest things in life, namely love and service, have a cost. Jesus put it this way, “No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.” May God bless you as you put your hand to the plow of love and service and never look back, keeping your eye on the One who gave all for you.

In Christ,

Brad

**The United Methodist Women** would like to cordially invite you to attend a Tea and Book review on Sunday, August 2nd at 2:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall of the First United Methodist Church. 'A Year in Review' will be given by Kathy Morgan. Those of you who have heard Kathy give a book review know she makes it a fun time for all. This gathering is open to the public. Y'all come!!!

### **School Supply Drive**

We will be collecting school supplies for families in need throughout the month of August. Each Sunday in August we will be collecting particular items. On Sunday, August 2<sup>nd</sup> we will be accepting donations for school uniforms. On Sunday, August 9<sup>th</sup> we will be collecting pens and pencils, Sunday, August 16<sup>th</sup> crayons and map pencils, and Sunday, August 23<sup>rd</sup> paper products. Thank you in advance for your support!

### **Fall Festival Planning Meeting**

This year we will be doing a different kind of Fall Festival. Our initial planning meeting will be Sunday, August 2<sup>nd</sup> at the church parsonage (830 Krisker Lane) at 6:00 p.m. Brad will cook hamburgers for our meeting as we plan together for our festival on Saturday, October 31<sup>st</sup>. If you would like to participate and be involved you are more than welcome to come and help us in our planning. Please R.S.V.P. by emailing [bradbrittain@hotmail.com](mailto:bradbrittain@hotmail.com) or calling Brad at 254-625-2435.

### **Administrative Board Meeting**

Our next Administrative Board meeting will be Thursday, August 6th at 7:00 p.m. in the sanctuary. We will be hearing reports from our various committees, as well as outlining programs for the fall. In particular, we will be discussing outreach opportunities for our church. Our emphasis as a church centers around three categories -- evangelism, outreach/mission, and prayer. Every member is a voting member of the Board and is encouraged to attend.

### **BBQ Cook-Off**

We will be having our 2<sup>nd</sup> annual BBQ Cook-Off on Saturday, August 22<sup>nd</sup> at 6:00 p.m. Last year we had a great crowd and time as we ate some great BBQ. This year we will have the following categories – Best Brisket, Best Chicken, Best Ribs, and Best Miscellaneous (whatever kind of BBQ you want to bring – pork loin, sausage, etc.) We will not be cooking the BBQ on site (no need to haul your grill to the church). Simply bring your BBQ to the church ready to eat at 6:00 p.m. For those not bringing BBQ we ask that you bring side dishes for our meal – potato salad, coleslaw, beans, etc.

### **Youth Sunday / Blessing of the Backpacks**

On Sunday, August 23<sup>rd</sup> our youth will be leading us in our worship service. In addition to the youth leading worship, we will also have a "Blessing of the Backpacks" where we will have a special time of prayer for all students and school employees as we begin another school year. If you are interested in helping with our youth Sunday contact our youth director Jill Flatt, and she will be glad to get you involved.

### **Nursing Home Ministry**

Thursday, August 27<sup>th</sup> we will be meeting at the Haven Nursing Home here in Mexia for our monthly worship service with the residents. We meet at 2:30 p.m. at the Haven and worship from 2:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. If you are interested in participating, meet us at the Haven on the 27<sup>th</sup>.

### **Wednesday Evening Meals Returning**

We will be resuming our Wednesday evening meal at the church on Wednesday, September 9<sup>th</sup>. Meals on Wednesday evenings will be served from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. This year we are going to have different small groups in our church be responsible for the meals on various Wednesdays (Sunday school classes, youth group, choir, etc.). Each group will provide a Wednesday meal two times throughout the fall. This is a great opportunity to fellowship on a weekly basis and share in a meal together before our Wednesday evening programs. Our church staff will provide the first meal on September 9<sup>th</sup>.

### **Invitation to the New Testament**

Rev. Brittain will be leading a class entitled "Invitation to the New Testament" beginning Wednesday, September 9<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. The class will introduce participants to the major themes and storylines throughout the New Testament. This is an eight week course that will conclude on Wednesday, October 28<sup>th</sup>. The class meets from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. If you are in the choir we will arrange the class to where you can attend choir practice at 7:00 p.m. as well as attend the Bible study. Email [bradbrittain@hotmail.com](mailto:bradbrittain@hotmail.com) or call him at 254-562-5567 if you are interested in attending the class.

### **McCurdy Mission Trip**

We had a great time on our mission trip to McCurdy School in Espanola, New Mexico. This year we had sixteen individuals join together to work at the McCurdy School. McCurdy School is a Christian school that serves students Pre-K through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The mission was founded in 1912 and has provided a quality education for students for nearly 100 years. Last year thirty three students graduated from McCurdy with all thirty three attending college and receiving over \$440,000 in scholarships as a whole! McCurdy School relies on church groups like ours to help with maintenance and upkeep of their 40 acre campus. Without the work that is done each summer from work teams the school would not be able to operate. Next year we will be going the week of July 10-16<sup>th</sup>. We wanted everyone who might be interested in attending to have the date in advance and begin thinking about being a part of the mission group next year.

### **Knit Wits News**

On Thursday, August 6<sup>th</sup>, the group will have a reorganization meeting starting at 9:30 a.m.. Anyone doing any kind of craft; quilting, embroidery, knit, crochet etc., is welcome to attend. We will be meeting in the Fellowship Hall.



## Methodist Youth Fellowship (MYF) News:



Our summer has been SUPER. June was great with work and fun. We worked at the church doing landscaping, washed windows for the Tidwell's and did some yard work for Jeannie Gunn.



Our MYF also went to Hurricane Harbor! Youth who earned 1 ½ hours worth of work became eligible to spend a day at Hurricane Harbor. Youth began earning hours in May and finished up at the end of June. It was a huge success with many youth attending. Many sunburns, too!! OUCH!



We had a great time at the Church Swim Night. Many youth and church members visited, swam, and ate homemade ice cream. YUMMMM....

**THE M&M Fundraiser IS BACK!!** This is a super easy way to help the youth raise money for their various outings. Anyone can do it! "Check out" a tube, fill it with quarters, and return it to the church office. It may take you a week or it may take a month....we don't mind. We appreciate you being willing to donate your time and quarters. We will have a table set up in the foyer of the church with youth there "signing out" M&M tubes.

**We had NINE youth attend Church Camp!!** They LOVED it and can't wait to go back next year. We appreciate everyone who donated to the Youth Scholarship Fund. Half of the youth could attend because of your generosity!!

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!** August 23rd is our MYF Sunday so our youth will be leading the worship. They are really excited and are already working on the details! You won't want to miss it!!

**Bake Sale** – The MYF would like to have a bake sale on August 23rd. We will have various brownies, an assortment of cookies, cakes and pies. *The catch* – each youth must make their own dessert item. HA!! Their family can't do it for them!!! This should be great fun to see what they can do. Be sure to bring some "foldin' money" to buy these wonderful desserts from our youth.

**Our Youth Planning Meeting** will resume in September. I will send out reminder post cards about the meeting. Our goal is to get more parents involved in their child's Christian education so it is *important* that you attend these meetings.

*News from Preschool Director Sherry Miller...*

**Camp E.D.G.E. – August 11**  
Group 5 and 6 Summer Musical and Dinner  
5:30 Dinner Served / 6:00 Musical

Cool off this summer with Hot Dog Dinner and a musical at First United Methodist Church on Tuesday, August 11th. Our Group 5 and 6 children will be performing in the Fellowship Hall at 6 pm. Dinner will be served from 5:30 – 6 pm. (the children will be eating at the Preschool lunchroom at 5:00 before they have their final practice and costuming before the musical). We've been singing the Camp E.D.G.E. songs (Experiencing and Discovering God Everyday!) this summer and look forward to sharing them with our friends and parents. FUMC Members are invited to come and show your support of the Preschool. Donations will be accepted to cover the cost of the meal. Please Come!

**Libraries Deep In the Heart of Texas**  
**(Summer Reading Program 2009 – Gibbs Memorial Library)**  
**June 30th – July 30th**

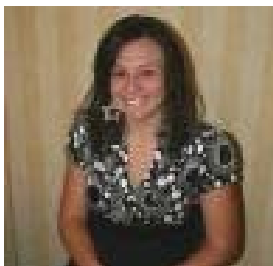
FMP again participated in the summer reading program at Gibbs Memorial Library. This year's theme was "Libraries Deep in the Heart of Texas". Each child in Groups 2B through 6 had the opportunity to earn a special reward from the library by reading a required number of books (or for non readers having the books read to them) by July 30th.

We also attended story times at Gibbs Library on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The children will attend the end celebrations on August 4th and 5th and receive their awards at that time.

**Jodi Maki Takes Position at Preschool**

Preschool is pleased to announce that Jodi Maki will be our 2009 – 2010 school year Literacy Specialist. Jodi will be working with each age group from 2 years to 5 years as she presents fun and exciting ways to enhance literacy skills in each age group. This year we will also be focusing on math concepts. We will again use the "Frog" Street Press Curriculum in addition to other resources which Jodi will add. This special time for the children is called "Frog Time" and is a fun part of each day at Preschool.

**Honoring Our Graduating Seniors**—On Sunday, May 31<sup>st</sup> the United Methodist Women honored our graduating seniors during the 10:30 a.m. worship service. After the worship service the United Methodist Women hosted a luncheon at the Hamilton House in honor of the graduating seniors and their families. This year our graduating seniors include: Austin Beard, Andrea O'Hare and Hillary Brady. Kendall Paschal, another Senior, was unable to attend.



**Church Directory Update, Kathy Morgan...**

Things are moving along on our new directory. Steve Cutchshaw has done a wonderful job of getting pictures taken and available for folks to view and purchase on his website ([www.uiphoto.photorelect.com](http://www.uiphoto.photorelect.com).) We also have proofs for viewing at the church. Steve's prices are very reasonable and I hope you will take advantage of his services. I have order forms available for anyone wishing to buy prints.



If you haven't had your picture taken, do not despair! We will resume the photo sessions in August. So many folks are out of town and we want to give everyone a chance to have their photos taken. We will also be taking Sunday school group pictures when we regroup in August. Call me at 472-0840 if you have any questions. Or you can contact Steve directly at 254-747-0252. Keep Smiling!

**Landscaping Update, Karen Harrison...**



We have begun phase one of our landscaping on the east side of the office and sanctuary. The irrigation system has been installed and is now in working order. Thanks to everyone who came to our workday in June. We graded the area, amended the soil and began laying the stone edging for the beds. Unfortunately we were not able to get as much done as we had planned because we had to reorder some of the stone edging. It is now in and we need a few strong volunteers to choose a date and get it installed. Next, we are waiting for some cooler weather to order the plants and get them in the ground. Of course, that is the rewarding part! Thanks again to all who donated time and money to our landscaping project.

*Thank You*

May He bless you with the goodness and the happiness you share—The Shirley Family.

I would like to donate \$50 to your church's organ fund in honor of Joe Paschal. He helped make our CD's again this year for the Delta Kappa Gamma Women Educator Society.

We could not have done it without him! Thanks so much and may God bless your church!

In Christ. Cathy Criner, State Music Chairman, DKG.

Jim & I just want to say thank you for all the prayers and support we received from FUMC while Jim was sick. Prayer is a powerful thing and we still have Jim with us because of all the prayers that were said. Jim is recovering and is doing great. FUMC will always hold a special place in our hearts.—Mary & Jim Benson



### Welcome New Members

Brandy & Murry Agnew,  
Children—Colton & Charlie  
Elaine Bounds  
Billy Hinton  
Kim DeCarlo



### August Birthdays

1st—Harlon Brady, 4th—John Irwin, 8th—R.J. Weaver, 11th—Brad Brittain, Walt Harrison, 12th—Woody Woodruff, 14th—Kristen Allen, 15th—Tim Edwards, Arnold Gray, Kortney Kelsey, Bob Ray, 16th—Murry Agnew, Brenda Woodruff, 17th—Donna Findley, Randy Machacek, 19th—Craig Kegerreis, 21st—Bennie Green, Karen Harrison, 26th—Lillie Mae Atkins, Ima Burroughs, 29th—Ann Burgoon, 31st—Charlie Agnew



### August Anniversaries



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, 29th—Charles & Lisa Paul, 31st—Larry & Sandy Hensley



### Memorials



Sallie Ramsey—Bob & Lady Fain      Ray Sealy—Bob & Lady Fain

Jean Williford—Margaret McDonald, Alleen Womack, Martha Carlson, Brenda Greer Craft, Karen Greer Bounds, Kathy Greer Bounds, Lady & Bob Fain

Tom Paschal—Kathy & Joe Paschal, Bette Thetford, Tad & Ima Burroughs, Mr. & Mrs. T.E. Bain, Jr.

Virginia Maner—David & Vilma Hernandez-Maner, Buddy & Donna Williford, Tony & Lou Pulliam, Gary & Pam Sullivan, and children, Randy & Debbie Sullivan and family

James Hoyte Neese III—Family of W. Lawrence Evans, family of Carol Sue McFall, James & Diane Bradley, Lillie Mae Atkins

***New Stephen Ministries Training Course to Start Soon!***

Our Stephen Ministry is going strong! We have 10 Stephen Ministers and they each are working with a care receiver. This is such a great ministry that our church provides. Stephen Ministry is a one-to-one ministry by trained and caring Christians.

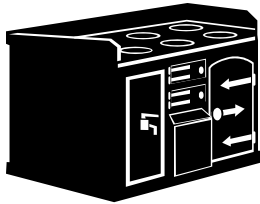


***Not sure what Stephen Ministers do?***

Stephen Ministers seek to bring Christ's healing love to people who are lonely, grieving, strangers, new parents, ill, or experiencing other stresses in life.

This fall, an in-depth training course will be offered for members who desire to become involved in this life-changing ministry. We need others to join us in this ministry. We promise....you will be blessed as you help others in need.

If you are interested in this ministry, please pick up an application in the church office. A meeting to answer any questions will be held **Monday, August 3rd at 6:00 p.m.** in the conference room or call Stephen Leaders, Pam Crider (254-562-5149) or Donna Williford (245-562-5149 ) if you would like more information. They would be glad to talk to you.



**COOKING CASSEROLES FUNDRAISER  
FOR COMMERCIAL COOK STOVE IN THE KITCHEN!**

Yummy frozen casseroles, great for those days when you don't have time to prepare anything for dinner, will be sold by the Stephen Ministers on Sunday, September 13th. The proceeds of this sale will be to help purchase a new commercial cook stove for the newly renovated church kitchen. Greek spaghetti, lasagna, chicken spaghetti and other delicious frozen casseroles will be ready for you to purchase by donation. The Stephen Ministers challenge other groups to get involved with unique ways of raising funds to purchase the new stove for the kitchen in the Fellowship Hall.

**Your Church Staff**

Rev. Brad Brittain, Pastor  
Dr. Richard Morgan, Director of Music  
Wynona Lipsett, Organist  
Jill Flatt, Youth Director  
Mary Benson, Administrative Assistant/Fiscal Coordinator  
Charles Paul, Building Maintenance  
Barbara Owens, Cleaning

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.