

THE FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH CONNECTIONS

First United Methodist Church

Mexia, Texas

February, 2009



... *“The Winchester House”*

In his book “Love Beyond Reason”, John Ortberg tells the story of the Winchester House. The Winchester House is one of the strangest houses in the United States. It was built by Mrs. Winchester, whose husband’s wealth came from the rifle associated with their name. Mrs. Winchester lost her husband and her only child. As you can imagine, she was overcome with grief and as a result she became obsessed with the occult. She began a massive building project on the belief that if she continued to build her house she would not die.

It is an incredible structure. The construction of the house occupied sixteen carpenters employed full time for thirty-eight years. It had more windows than the Empire State Building! There are twists and turns all throughout the house; secret passageways and hidden corridors and other eccentricities. There are stairs that run into ceilings and no further, and doors that open only into brick walls. All this was done to confuse Death.

Ortberg wrote, “She was still building when Death came, and Death was not confused at all. Death has a wonderful sense of direction.” That is another way of saying, “We are all going to die one day.” You and I both know that it is foolish to build a house thinking that it might prevent death and we would never undertake such a task. As Christians we know that we too will die one day and that we will no longer walk this earth in our current form. But we also know that this is not the end. We believe in the words penned by the Apostle Paul in I Corinthians, “Death has been swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

This Lent as we journey to the cross, may we all remember that we serve a risen Savior who has defeated death for us all and that we will one day share in his resurrection. Amen.

In Christ,

Brad

Message from Christian Ed. Program Coordinator, Charlotte Posey...

The Yahweh Sisterhood Luncheon, held January 17th, was a great success. Thank you so much UMW ladies for decorating our luncheon tables. Each table was absolutely beautiful. Thank you Karen and Tracy, for providing door prizes. Thirty eight women came to enjoy a wonderful lunch from Coffee Cabaret and to hear Joy Weaver. Our hearts were deeply touched as we heard her life's story. And we left encouraged that we could indeed believe God for more than we can even imagine.

Etiquette tips from Joy were fun and informative. It is my hopes that the women of our church will desire to have a similar event again in the future. Thank you everyone for making this event possible.

Message from First Methodist Preschool Director, Sherry Miller...

Playground Project Completed

Thanks to the generous donations of friends of our Preschool, the playground resurfacing project is now complete. The Preschool wants to express our sincere appreciation to the following contributors:

Ann Pendleton In Memory of Bobbie Pendleton
Michael and Sherry Miller In Memory of Vera Posey and Billy Posey

We also want to thank Terry Don Shivers of Shivers Excavation for his expertise and service in seeing that this project was completed. We still continue to enjoy the covered awning area that was donated many years ago by Estalee Price to provide much needed shade in one area of the playground. We also still enjoy the climbing structure that was made possible by donations from many in our community and by help from the Mexia Rotary Club.

Thanks to all these Preschool friends for their kindness and support of our program.

***Fathers Reading Everyday
F. R. E. D. Program comes to First Methodist Preschool***

F. R. E. D. is a 4 week program designed to encourage fathers (or male family members) to read to children every day. The program is developed by the Texas Cooperative Extension Service and will be provided to Preschool families from February 12th to March 12th under the direction of Alisha Brittain, First Methodist Preschool Literacy Specialist.

The kick off and information session will be on February 12th from 7:30 – 8:30 am (come and go) at our Donuts for Dad meeting time. We hope Dads will come have coffee and juice and donuts and hear about the program. Colleen Longbotham from Limestone County Extension will be here to introduce the program.

Message from Parley Wiggins Circle of UMW, Kathy Paschal, Secretary.....

The Parley Wiggins Circle of United Methodist Women met for their first meeting Monday night on January 12th, 2009. The meeting was led by newly-elected President Sue Franks. The meetings are held on the second Monday of each month at 7pm. This year the meetings will be held in the parlor of the Fellowship Hall. Several items were discussed including the planning of the year. The Circle will continue to collect box tops for the McCurdy School in New Mexico. So far, the Circle has collected over 500 box tops which have been mailed to the school. In the past two years, the school has redeemed 3 million points with Campbell soup labels. The McCurdy School was blessed with 2 new Dodge Minivans. You can learn all about it at the website which is <http://www.McCurdy.org> and find out more about the school and the volunteer work.

It was also announce that the Central Texas Conference of United Methodist Women will be having a Spiritual Growth Retreat at Lakeview Camp and Conference Center on March 20th– 22nd.

The group went to the Chapel for the devotional that was led by Sue Franks. The purpose of the United Methodist Women was recited in unison. The devotional was given after which hymns were sung and the meeting ended with the Wesley Covenant prayer.

We missed those members who were not able to be there and we welcome any new members who would like to join us. If anyone would like to know more about our great group, please contact Sue Franks or Kathy Paschal. We would love to have you with us. The next meeting will be February 9th at 7 pm. Please join us. You just don't know what you are missing!

Purpose of United Methodist Women

The organized unit of United Methodist Women shall be a community of women whose purpose is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative supportive fellowship; and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the Church.

Have you read the Bible all the way through recently???

The Alpha & Omega S.S. class is doing just that; but not real fast. The last announcement covered Gen thru to the end of the Book. Now it's Moses time. We have just read the introduction. And we are now ready to find out about "the rest of the story." (Each week we cover 2,3, or 4 chapters, mostly less). Come and find out with us and see what's next.

We meet in the fellowship hall @ 9:30 A.M. Sunday mornings.

Message from the Worship Committee, Kathy Paschal, Chairman.....

Well, another season of the Church has come and gone for another year and we are taking a slight breath until we get ready for Easter. What a wonderful time it was getting ready for Advent and Christmas. What an awesome feeling of humbleness in preparing for the celebration of the birth of the Messiah. I want to personally thank the Worship Committee for doing a great job in getting the Church ready and Cass for “climbing the ladder” to put the wreaths up and Dan, Ed and Art for taking them down.

I want to thank those that bought Poinsettias in honor or memory of someone. What a wonderful expression of love. To make it even better, the Church was able to write a check to “Meals On wheels” for \$281.00. We would like to do this again at Easter with the Easter Lilies. At that time we will designate another ministry for the money.

And did you know..... that the drapes on the pulpit and the lectern are called Paraments? Each color represents a season of the Church and has great significance. White represents the seasons of Christmas and Easter, Green represents the seasons of Epiphany and Ordinary times, and Purple represents the seasons of Advent and Lent.

What a blessing it is to serve Jesus Christ and His Church through the celebrations of worship. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Thank You Charlotte!

We would like to thank Charlotte Posey for service to the church over the past two years as Program Coordinator. Our church has started many new programs and ministries as a result of Charlotte’s work. Charlotte is going to focus most of her time now on caring for her father, and as a result will no longer be serving as our Program Coordinator. Charlotte will remain an active part of the church and looks forward to serving in ministry with you. Thanks again Charlotte

Chili Cook-Off

Thank you to everyone who attended the chili cook-off and gospel concert last month. We had a great time and enjoyed the fellowship and excellent chili recipes. Congratulations to Kenneth and Johnnie Christian – winners of the chili cook-off!

Fellowship Hall Project

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to our program of updating our fellowship hall. We have completed one classroom so far, and have now begun work on the chapel. We are in the process of working our way around the building; to not only repair what is in need of repair but also to make our building more attractive and up to date. Special thanks to those who have volunteered their time to help make these projects possible. Our goal is to complete the project by the end of this year.

McCurdy Mission Trip Meeting

On Sunday, February 1st we will have an informational meeting regarding our mission trip to McCurdy School this July. If you are planning on going to McCurdy this year, please join us for lunch at the parsonage (830 Krisker Lane) at 12:00 p.m. In addition to providing background information on McCurdy School and our church's involvement in this mission, we will also cover the details of the trip. The trip is scheduled for July 11th – 18th.

Confirmation Class Forming – Wednesday February 11th

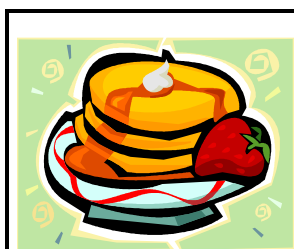
We are beginning our Confirmation Class on Wednesday, February 11th at 4:30 p.m. in the Boardroom of the Fellowship Hall. If you have children 6th grade and up who have not been confirmed, please register them in Confirmation Class. Confirmation is the process where children discover more about the Christian faith and accept for themselves the gift of God's grace in Jesus Christ. Call the church office to register your children 562-5567. Rev. Brittain will be leading the class.

Depression Connection Seminar

On Sunday, February 15th Tony Campbell from the Depression Connection Team in Fort Worth, TX will be presenting an educational / informational seminar on the topic of depression. The seminar will be in our sanctuary from 2-5 p.m. Most every family is affected directly or indirectly by depression in one form or another. Tony's program is designed to help identify symptoms of depression and also help those who are struggling with depression, including family and friends. This is a unique opportunity to learn more about a growing condition in our society. For more information about the Depression Connection Team, go to www.depressionconnection.org. This program is for the entire community of Mexia so be sure and invite others who might benefit.

Ash Wednesday Worship Service

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the Lenten Season in the Christian Church. Our service this year will be on Wednesday, February 25th at 6:00 p.m. in the sanctuary. All families are encouraged to attend and take part in this special service as we begin our journey to the cross and ultimately the empty tomb.



Pancake Supper!

The Youth are planning a PANCAKE SUPPER for Ash Wednesday, February 25th, 2009. We will be cooking for everyone in the church starting at 5:00pm. We would love to have everyone come, eat, and remember Ash Wednesday.

Common Grounds Book Club

The Common Grounds Book Club will meet on Tuesday, February 24th to discuss the book “*Same Kind of Different as Me*” by Ron Hall and Denver Moore. We will meet at Coffee Cabaret at 7:00 p.m. on the 24th. This is a great time to get together to fellowship over coffee and dessert and discuss a great book. If you have never joined us we invite you to be a part of the group. You can purchase your copy of “Same Kind of Different as Me” from any major book retailer.



Dear First United Methodist Church

Thank you so very much for everything you have done for us. We loved all of our Christmas presents. Come and see us sometime.

Signed: All the kids of God’s Gang
(God’s Gang meets at 3:35 on Tuesday)

Thank You,

Thank you very much . This gift will help Meals on Wheels meet expenses for another month. This money will help pay for lunch for 108 plates. That’s a big help and God is blessing us.

Limestone County Senior Services
God Bless You
Ann Vinson
(FUMC sent \$281 to Meals on Wheels from the Christmas Poinsettias donations)

Dear FUMC Mexia,

I am very grateful for the scholarship that was awarded to me for the 2008-2009 school year and would like to thank the committee for choosing me to be one of the recipients. Once again I say thank you for giving me this opportunity.

Sincerely,
John Irwin

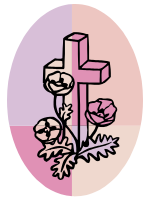
February Birthdays

1st-Art Nutt, 2nd-Joe David Wilson, 3rd-Brandon Paul, 7th-Andrew Brittain, Theda Oberholtzer, Rebecca Ray, 11th-Chris Shivers, 12-Sherry Manning, 13th-Buddy Williford, 16th-Roy Baccus, Walt McKeever, 18th-Brook Simmons, 19th-Noma Nell Thomas, 20th-Diane Burks, 21st-Billy Howze, Don Lipsett, 24th-David Maner, 26th-Lois Willett, 27th-Penny Gray, 28th-Richard Morgan, T.G. Temples.



February Anniversaries

2nd-Pat and Wendy Simmons, 21st-Billy & Louise Howze



In Memory

Dorothy Kott Goode
Randy & Ginger Kott



Congratulations!

Mallory Ann Meyer arrived January 23rd, 2009 at 6:45 a.m. Proud parents are Patrick and Kimberly Myers.



Campbell's Labels—Box Tops for Education

Thank you for your faithful support of McCurdy's School through the Campbell's and Box tops for Education programs. Please note: Campbell's has changed it's program and wants only the UPC (barcode). They will accept the lids from V-8, V-8 Fusion and V-8 Splash. Current list of eligible products can be found on their website: www.labelsforeducation.com. For a complete listing of Box Tops products, go to www.boxtops4education.com.

Thank you so much for the UPC's and Box Tops First United Methodist sent to support McCurdy School. We truly appreciate them.

God Bless,
Ella Martinez



Stephen Ministry Update



Our church is privileged to have twelve committed members completing the Stephen Ministry Training Course. Stephen Ministers are members of our congregation who listen, care, encourage, and provide emotional and spiritual support to people who are facing a crisis or going through tough times. The care individuals receive is confidential, free, and helpful. The Stephen Ministers in training began their training in September of 2008 and will complete the training this March. After the training is complete, we will have a commissioning service in which we will officially commission our Stephen Ministers. Thanks again to all who have supported the institution of this ministry at FUMC Mexia, especially to those who have given of themselves to be trained as a Stephen Minister. Presently Pam Crider and Donna Williford are leading the training for the following: Linda and Craig Kegerreis, Buddy Williford, Lisa Paul, Patsy Henry, Betty Thetford, Jackie Tidwell, Ann Neill, Gael McKeever and Mary Benson. Rev. Brittain is also taking the course as an advisor.

God's Gang Needs your help!

When you are out doing your grocery shopping this week can you throw in an extra box of crackers, pretzels, cheese nips or fruit cups? You see God's Gang is in need of snacks. You can bring them to the church office or leave them in kitchen. They will greatly appreciate your effort.

Thanks' from God's Gang

Your Church Staff

Rev. Brad Brittain, Pastor
Dr. Richard Morgan, Director of Music
Kortney Kelsey, Youth Director
Charlotte Posey, Christian Education/Program Coordinator
Wynona Lipsett, Organist
Mary Benson, Administrative Assistant/Fiscal Coordinator
Cass Candy, 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.