A monthly publication of the First United Methodist Church

The Voice

Rev. Dr. Brian Bosworth, Pastor
Rev. Ricky Harrison, Associate Pastor
(940) 627-3362; info@decaturmethodist.org

Issue 1 of 12

January 1, 2019

Children: Ashley Craven
Youth: Patrick Steil
Secretary: Ann Piña
Administrator: Bonnie Wohlleben

I am still feeling a heightened sense of emotion from the Advent and Christmas seasons and celebrations as I write this. No matter how busy it seems to get this time of year or the stress that is the inevitable part of pastoring through the holidays, I always feel great hope and joy in hearing the incarnational story of God coming to us in the Son we know as Jesus. Funny thing about it, it is the same story every year, but we are invited into an entirely new experience each and every year. God bursts into the world in unexpected fashion to bring about new hope and remind us of God's immense love for all people. He shall be called "Emmanuel," which means God is with us. (Matthew 1: 23) And every year I am reminded of this story of God loving us even when we least expect it.

When I think of the Bible stories of Jesus' birth found in Matthew and Luke's Gospels, I am reminded about all the "expected yet unexpected" moments of those times, not to mention our own times as well. For instance, In Matthew 1, we are told that that an angel appears to Joseph and explains that the child his fiancé, Mary, is carrying was conceived by the Holy Spirit and that he, Joseph, should not be afraid to marry her and then name the child "Jesus" for the child will be the savior to the world. We are told that all this was to fulfill what had already been told by the prophet: "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel." (Isaiah 7: 14) So the people, especially people of faith, should have reasonably expected from the prophecy that the Lord himself was going to give a sign. But what was unexpected was a sign where the One who was to be their Messiah would be born into a scandalous situation (an unwed, pregnant teen, who was of little significance to the powers of the day). By the way, this is the same Spirit that brought order out of the chaos in in the creation story (Genesis 1: 2). The Holy Spirit brings about a manifestation of God's saving purposes for the world throughout history, including our present times as well.

How about the Magi from the east? They are Gentiles and probably more like priests than kings. Certainly they were people of prominence with access to important people and places. They travel to Jerusalem (a definite center of power) and ask of King Herod (who subsequently asked his religious leaders) about the Messiah and Bethlehem (they quoted Scripture - Micah 5: 2 - that even Herod didn't want to embrace) before going on to Bethlehem and paying homage to Jesus. The Jewish leaders in Jerusalem had Scripture but did not understand how to interpret them in light of Jesus. They were unable, or possibly unwilling, to do the expected and interpret what the prophet had foretold. God was doing the unexpected again when these Gentile Magi, insignificant as Mary and Joseph to the imperial authorities, are used to bring about God's purposes. Can you think of the "insignificant" of our day who might be a part of what God is doing in the world today? We don't expect them to be, but remember how God does the unexpected. Who are the messengers today to remind us of God's purposes? How might the Holy Spirit be at work, even in those who convince themselves they already have it figured out? We have Scripture but is our understanding the only way or does the Spirit do the unexpected in interpreting them for us in light of Jesus today?

In Luke's narratives in Chapter 1-2, we hear how the promise made to Mary (who knew she was a virgin) about the baby she carried being conceived by the Holy Spirit was true. That much she expected. However, she did not expect a blessing and confirmation from her older relative, Elizabeth who was filled with the Holy Spirit as Mary approached and felt her own unborn child jump in her womb for joy as an added confirmation that the "mother of her Lord" had come to her.

We expect important news to go to important people. Perhaps that is what Herod thought appropriate. However, the news of God's Son being born went to the shepherds instead. Why the shepherds before the decision-makers and authority-takers? God often does the unexpected in God's Kingdom to give hope to the truly faithful and at the same time show what is more important to those who live in their own, self-envisioned centers of power. God does the unexpected by sharing the great news with those who by societal standards are despised and lowly, like a pregnant and un-wed teenager, pagan priests, people whom we don't expect much from, and late-night shepherds.

Maybe that's why I love to hear this message every year about God's extraordinary love. I know the plot and the basics, but I trust that the Holy Spirit will help me, and others, experience what might be new in my world this year or at this time, and give me understanding and direction that can help me live into the great hope and joy that God offers each of us who seek to live into God's purposes. Same story and the same faithful God. But will I be the same? Will I allow the Holy Spirit to be my guide and stick to what I think is expected, or will I allow unexpectedness of God to move me deeper into discipleship?

Let's trust and have faith in God and join together in the body of Christ this year and see where God might be pointing us.

See You in Worship!
Brian

Office Closed
Tuesday, January 1

Decatur Cares Mobile Food Pantry
Saturday, January 5
7:30 a.m., FUMC Parking Lot

Trustees Meeting
Tuesday, January 8
6:00 p.m., Room 209

Wise County United Methodist Men
Tuesday, December 8
6:30 p.m., FUMC Decatur

Family Ministries Team Meeting
Monday, January 14
5:00 p.m., Room 209

Scholarship Committee Meeting
Monday, January 14
6:00 p.m., Room 300

Staff Meeting
Thursday, January 17
11:15 p.m., Room 209

Faith Discussions-Methodists in Dialog
Sunday, January 20
5:00 p.m., Asbury Hall

Methodist Men's Breakfast
Saturday, January 26
7:00 a.m., Room 100

Learning • Growing • Giving • Serving

CHURCH FRIENDS AND FAMILY

Abby Bramlett, Jase Reeves, Jack Tucker, Tim Woodruff, Noah Smith, Sandra Little, Madolyn Congdon, Lilly Hunt, Family of Arnie Deaton, Susan Williams, Sue Fennell, David Sisk, Family of Tom Harris, Decatur ISD Administration, Staff, Teachers, & Students, Lola, Virginia Williams & Family, Gus

In the Military: Charlie Fortenberry, Michael Jordan, Jake Logue, Josh Murphy, Chris Hammond, Matthew Roberson, Kolin Rottner, Joshua VanNoy, Keygun Beaver and Bryce Dudley

1 - Garry Johnson, Derrick Minor, Kurrie Murphree
2 - Richard Bastian, Tristan Gillespie, Jimmy Kirk
4 - Clark Allen, Tanaya Lunday, Mark Null, Dena Silvers
6 - Becky Lyles
7 - Irene Griffith, Amber Ramsey, Shelby Sewell
9 - Morgan Payne
10 - Valleri Sewell, Don Stephens, Clarence Winn
11 - Lily Rosenbaum
12 - Jason Johnson, Cassidy McQuiston, Jennifer Smurthwaite, Cathy Tally
14 - Kelsey Males
15 - Kaitlynn Koger, Sharon Meyer
16 - Langley Smurthwaite, Loretta Vick
17 - Judy Hill
18 - Joe Miller, David Murphree, Clark Waggoner
19 - David Rosenbaum, Adelynn Summers
20 - Bert Little, Patrick Steil
21 - Sharon Montgomery
22 - Blanca Galindo, Roy Wilkinson
23 - Shannon Johnson
24 - Paula Null
25 - Rubye Helm, Cheryl Renfro
27 - Logan Cullop, Charlotte Meador, Patrick Murphree
28 - Cheryl Fostel
29 - Christopher Caballero, Reetah Johnson, Payton McAlister
30 - Bill Hill, Randall Watson
31 - Kreid Hafer, Steve Young

OUTREACH

Donations for WARM
Canned Goods (Fruits & Vegetables)

Sunday Refreshments
Men's Class

Guest Follow Up

Care Corp
Sharon Walker, notifier
Sharon Voss, Shirley Byers

Melissa and I want to thank all of you for the beautiful Christmas cards and gifts that you extended to us this Christmas. We are touched and humbled by your thoughtfulness and generosity and blessed to be serving with you!

Pastor Brian

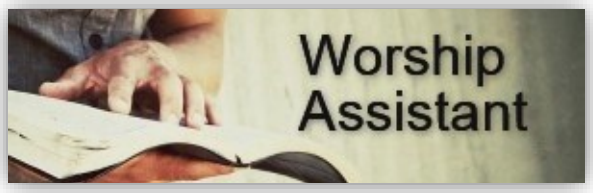
Looking for a class?

The Men's Sunday School Class invites you to join them in the fellowship hall Sundays at 9:45 am.

Men of all ages are welcome.
(We have the donuts and coffee!)

If you have any questions about the class, contact Clark Waggoner, Thomas Laird or Dave Eaton.

A brochure is available in the Narthex with a full list of available Sunday School classes.



January 6th
8:30 a.m. Worship Service
Scripture Reader: Barbara Haley
Communion Servers: Asa Johnson, Ronnie & Debra Walker
Acolyte: Ben Bond
10:50 a.m. Worship Service
Scripture Reader: Trumanell Maples
Communion Servers: Fred & Cheryl Renfro, Sally Rieger
Acolyte:
Counters: Junior Sconce & Tobi Cullop

January 13th
8:30 a.m. Worship Service
Scripture Reader: Penny Holt
Communion Servers:
Jamie Walther, Margaurette Roberts, Virginia Caraway
Acolyte: Hannah & Trey Milliman
10:50 a.m. Worship Service
Scripture Reader: Suzanne Hencken
Acolytes: Tucker Hammons & Abby Reeves
Counters: Gary Cocanougher & Clay Patterson

January 20th
8:30 a.m. Worship Service
Scripture Reader: Youth
Acolyte: Madi & Mayli Moreland
10: 50 a.m. Worship Service
Scripture Reader: Youth
Acolyte: Alissa Butler
Counters: Foster Walker & Cheryl Renfro

January 27th
8:30 a.m. Worship Service
Scripture Reader: Rita Tucker
Communion Servers: Jack & Sharon Smith, Virginia Caraway
Acolyte: Audree & Zachary Knox
10: 50 a.m. Worship Service
Scripture Reader: Jennifer Featherston
Acolyte: Lane Craven
Counters: Terry Huston & Fred Renfro

January Communion Set Up: Life Builders Class

Learning • Growing • Giving • Serving

Why Dinners Matter

Educators know the expression, "They don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." All teachers are given data about students who have special curriculum needs and food allergies. But REAL teachers know who just got a new puppy. Who lives with 3 siblings and a single parent in a 2-bedroom, 1-bathroom house. Who's primary caregiver is a grandparent. Who needs praise on a little task to
continue working toward a bigger one.
Who's afraid to be recognized, but desperately wants to belong.
The same is true in our church.
Yes, "help me with your name" during the services is a wonderful start. It's especially fine when we see each other away from church and can recall those names! But Dinner for 4 lets us go way beyond calling names (or "checking roll"). We find out who has lived in other countries and who is Wise County born and bred. Who was raised in another denomination - or no denomination - and who was baptized as an infant in the Methodist church.
All we really need is time to invest in our church family. The "dinners" can be brown-bag gatherings, meetings at Braum's, or coffee first thing in the morning.

Please join us in the Spring.
We will learn about each other in a way that Jesus taught us to do
- sitting together around a table -
as he did with his followers.

FUMC Podcasts now available on iTunes!

Search for
First United Methodist Church of Decatur

Subscribe to our channel and listen to the sermons on your smart device from anywhere!

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
DECATUR, TEXAS

First United Methodist Church - Decatur, TX
First United Methodist Church
Subscribed

MinistrySafe®

If you have been a Ministry Safe certified volunteer for FUMC, watch for an email from Ministry Safe with a link to be re-certified.

Ministry Safe certifications are good for two years.

If you have any questions or would like to become a Ministry Safe certified volunteer, contact the church office.

(940)627-3362

Thank you!

Thank you for the outpouring of gifts and donations provided for our church nursery.
The children are enjoying the new toys!
Thank you also to the Family Ministry team for organizing the shower for the nursery.

We are blessed beyond measure to have such a loving congregation!
~ Alea Pena, Nursery Coordinator

Giving Made Easy

Choose the option that is most convenient for you. Change the way you give at any time. Save your checks, your time, and your worry and set up recurring gifts.
Recurring gifts can be set up from the Smart Phone App or the website.
(Call the office if you wish to do this and need help.)

Kiosks located in the Narthex, first floor foyer, and MAC.

100% of your donation goes to the fund you designated to further the work of the church. The church incurs an approximate 3% fee imposed by credit card companies. Help the church avoid paying fees by making your electronic donations via ACH.

As always, contact the church office or any Finance Committee Member if you have questions or need help.

www.decaturmethodist.org

Mail checks to:
P.O. Box 302
Decatur, TX 76234

Annual Thanksgiving Feast provided by the FUMP Board.
Special thanks to Sharon Walker and Penny Holt for serving,

FUMC Preschool

The kids loved singing Christmas Carols with Ms. Kathy.

Thank You to Our Church Leaders!

On January 1, 2019, we welcome a new class of Church leaders (Class of 2021) into their new roles. The transition will be an easy one as the outgoing Class of 2018 helped to keep the Church in a very solid position. Thank you for your 3 years of hard, but fruitful work, Class of 2018 (and the continuing Classes of 2019 and 2020). We continue to make Disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world!

Faith Discussions Event Planned for January 20, 2019

In the summer of 2018, we had a series of 3 Sunday evening gatherings where various faith topics were discussed informally by those who attended.

On Sunday, January 20, 2019, another "Faith Discussion – Methodists in Dialog" is planned for 5 PM in Asbury Hall (the MAC).

This discussion will include an opportunity to hear some of the work and topics covered in report from the United Methodist Church's Commission on the Way Forward and issues that may go before our General Conference being held February 23-26, 2019 in St. Louis, MO.

Leadership Training on January 27

Each year, the Northwest District rallies its resources to provide leadership training for folks who will be serving as church leaders. While you need not be a church leader to attend, those newly elected or serving with Trustees, SPRC, Finance, Missions, Families, Children, and Youth will find a topic that you may find helpful in carrying out the tasks that fall under your guidance.

This year's training event will occur at **FUMC Henrietta from 3:00-5:30 PM on Sunday, January 27, 2019**. If childcare is needed, please contact the Northwest District Office at 940-767-6621 before Monday, January 21, 2019. Transportation in the Church van will be available and can be requested on our Church's event registration sheet in the Narthex.

FUMC Financials Update

As of 12/28/2018

Giving to General Operating Fund

Year to Date: 623,819
Average Weekly Gifts: 12,231
Weekly Budget Need: 13,391

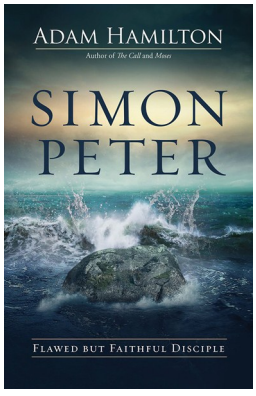
Continue the Vision Pledge

(Original pledge drive)
Total Pledged: 350,898
Pledge Balance Not Received: 17,382

See the Vision Pledge

(Current pledge drive)
Total Pledged: 316,130
Pledge Balance Not received: 61,160

Total Building Note Balance Due: 172,920



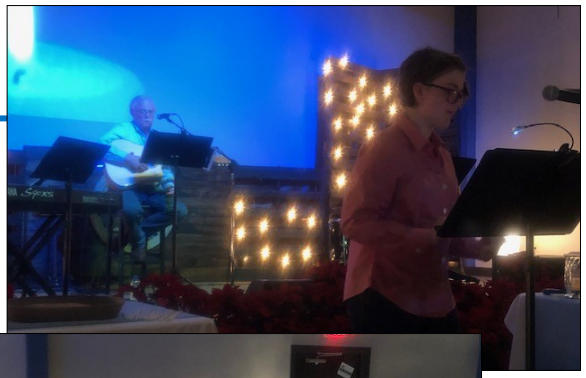
Reconnect Begins January 23rd

The Spring Reconnect term begins Wednesday, January 23, 2019.

The first six weeks our study will be based on Adam Hamilton's *Simon Peter: Flawed But Faithful Disciple*.

You can sign-up and order a copy of the book at the registration table in the Narthex. Cost of the book will be $15. As usual, our Wednesday evening activities begin with a meal at 5:45 PM and activities for all ages at 6:30 PM.

Christmas Eve-Eve Community Candlelight Worship Service



Blue Christmas Service

Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship Service

First United Methodist Church
104 South Miller Street
Post Office Box 302
Decatur, Texas 76234-0302

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Non-Profit Organization
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Follow us on Instagram
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Newsletter DEADLINE!

Monday, January 28 at 1:00 p.m.

Thursday, January 31
8:30 a.m.—Character Builders Classroom

For any submissions you would like put in The Voice, call the church office at 627-3362 or email administrator@decaturmethodist.org.

If you want to see your church event pictures in The Voice, send them to us! We would love to include those for all the church members to enjoy.