

First United Methodist Church Commerce

Volume 12, Issue 12

December 2014

Community Thanksgiving Dinner



Join us for Thanksgiving dinner and wonderful fellowship with the community on Thanksgiving Day, November 27, from 11 a.m. to

1 p.m. in the Family Ministry Center.

There are many ways to become involved with this annual tradition. You can make soup to be included with home-delivered meals or bake a pie and drop off at the church. If you can help set up, serve, deliver or clean up Thanksgiving Day, that is great too! Contact Sabrina Green at 903.366.6533 if you have questions or can help!



*Candlelight
Christmas Eve
Service
Wednesday, Dec. 24
7:00pm
in the Sanctuary*

Advent 2014 Poinsettias

Orders for poinsettias will be taken until Monday, December 8th. You may take them home after the December 24th Candlelight Worship Service.



Saturday, December 6

10 am - 1 pm

**First United Methodist Church
1709 Hwy 24 in Commerce**



EAT!

Homemade Stew & Cornbread

\$3 Children & Students • \$5 Adults • \$8 Jars To Go

ENJOY!

Youth & Children's Choirs @ 11:30 am

Christmas Craft Station For Kids

SHOP!

Baked Goods & Other Delights • Antiques & Vintage Finds

Christmas Decorations & Gifts • Alternative Gifts

All Proceeds Go Directly To Missions In Commerce & Beyond

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Thanksgiving For Connecting and Serving Together With a Prayer for Growing 2014 Senior Pastor's Report

By: Dr. Gregory S. Neal



It is with joy and thanksgiving that I praise God for the warm, genuine, and generous welcome that I have received in coming to First United Methodist Church of Commerce, Texas. The congregation has been wonderful, bending over backwards to help me feel appreciated and accepted during these months of transition into my pastorate among them. I am especially grateful for their openness and acceptance, and I look forward to my future ministry here with great anticipation.

Commerce's First United Methodist Church is an amazing congregation with an honorable, God graced past. They have impressive human resources, great faith, open hearts and minds, and an eager willingness to serve God and God's children. Their outreach in the community is impressive, their ministries with children and youth are incredible, their mission among the college students at Texas A&M Commerce is awesome, and their support for the senior citizens of Commerce is touching. As of today I cannot begin to catalog all the wonderful ways that this church is in ministry; I am still only learning about them all, observing their scope, breadth, and depth. Indeed, as we move into 2015 I look forward to continuing to discover all the wonderful ways that God works through these people. Also, I look forward to finding ways of plugging in and providing leadership and participating in their many ministries.

It is no secret that First UMC Commerce has recently come through a period of financial crisis. The prior few years have been difficult, with the general economic down-turn playing a huge role in the financial troubles that beset the church. The twin challenges of paying down their debt while trying to meet increasing operational expenses with declining income led the church's leadership to the point of having to face some tragic choices between several unpalatable alternatives during the prior several charge conferences. Thanks to their willingness to make those hard choices, and the faithful dedication, giving, and presence of the church's leadership and the congregation in general, the church has weathered the financial storm, paid off its lingering debt, and now finds itself in a significantly improved economic situation. Income through tithes and offerings is up, attendance in its worship services is improving, its missions and ministries are flourishing, and there is a general attitude of hopeful optimism in the church. The positive outlook among many in the church is playing a large role in the rising tide of the spirit, and lays an impressive foundation for what God is calling the church to do in 2015 and beyond.

The Church's mission and ministries teams – known as **Connect, Grow, and Serve** – are a brilliant way to organize and coordinate the church's activities. **Connect** keeps us hooked together by advancing our outreach to visitors, constituents, active and absent members. **Grow** focuses upon the spiritual health of the congregation by promoting opportunities for worship, study, and faith formation. **Serve** takes the spiritual growth factor and puts it into action through opportunities to reach out to others with the active-Gospel of Jesus Christ. All three areas must work in tandem for all to benefit.

One of the things the congregation has asked for in their pastor is someone who can lead them in their spiritual growth as the people of God. They are looking for guidance and leadership in the spiritual, Biblical, theological, and practical growth of the church, all while maintaining a faithful witness to the calling of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This is an area where I have a particular interest, experience, and success in my ministry. Beginning in 2015 the following Grow-initiatives will given specific, principle emphasis.

- **Bible and Theological Study.** In my ministry I have long conducted various kinds of Bible Studies, from leading or supporting Disciple Bible Study, "The Christian Believer" and the Alpha Course, to leading my own "Pastor's Bible Study". These studies have always been well-received and the fruit of their experience has been a blessing to me and to the congregations which I have served. Since FUMCC has a history of lay-lead Disciple Bible Study, I will encourage its continuation. And, in 2015 I intend to launch my "The Pastor's Bible Study" at FUMCC; depending upon the level of interest, I anticipate holding both a day-time session for those who can come only during the day, and a night-time session for those who can only make it at night.

- **Targeted Studies:** I enjoy leading short-term, targeted studies related to the seasons of the Church year (i.e., Advent, Lent, Easter, Pentecost), as well as on specific topics. For example, I am a facilitator for the UMC's *This Holy Mystery* Communion Study, and have led it over 50 times across the denomination, as well as in several Churches in the North Texas Conference, the Conference UMW, the Lay Speaker's program, and the Course of Study; I look forward to leading it at FUMCC, along with other subject and seasonal-specific studies.
- **The Walk to Emmaus.** This incredible "Short Course in Christianity," offered by the United Methodist Church's Upper Room, has long been a critical part of my own spiritual growth and continuing formation as a Christian and as a minister of the Gospel. I have enjoyed serving on Emmaus Walks, and as the Dallas Community Assistant and Senior Spiritual Director, for more than 17 years. I have seen the lives of hundreds of men and women totally changed through their involvement in Emmaus, both as pilgrims and as members of the community, making Walk-retreats possible for others. FUMCC has a small number of Emmaus "Graduates" – people who have taken a pilgrim walk in the past – and I praise God for this. It is my intention to offer the Emmaus experience to any and all in the Church who would like to go. Commerce is situated in the East Texas Emmaus Community, but is also on the edge of the Dallas Community, with half of Dallas's walks taking place just outside of Royce City at Sabine Creek Ranch (a non-denomination retreat center). My continued involvement on the Board of the Dallas Emmaus Community provides us an opportunity for the Church to plug into what that huge community has to offer and experience walks not too far from home.
- **Continued Worship Experiences.** FUMCC currently has three weekly worship services: on Sunday morning an 8:45 am informal service in the Chapel and an 11 am Traditional service in the Sanctuary; on Wednesday evening at 5:30 pm we also have a Eucharist Service which is conducted in the Anglican Tradition and Style. All of this will continue, with particular emphasis on providing both new and different experiences within these services. I am especially interested in the Wednesday evening Anglican service; relative to it, it was truly a "God thing" that I was appointed to FUMCC: of all the clergy of the North Texas Conference, it is probably not an exaggeration to say that I am among those best suited by background, training, and temperament to preside at such a service. While those who have joined from the closed Episcopal Church of the Epiphany frequent this service, I am somewhat dismayed that more people from within the congregation at-large don't take advantage of this incredible opportunity to experience the spiritual depth of such a service and receive the Lord's Supper on a weekly basis. I hope, over time, to advance the appreciation and experience of this service both within the congregation and in the Commerce community at-large.

These are just a few areas relative to **Grow** where I will be leading the congregation in 2015. In all of these, and beyond them, it is my prayer that the congregation will be able to benefit from what I have to offer for spiritual formation.

Finally, I want to lift up a general ministry emphasis for the Church. It's in-part relative to the presence of the University across the street, but it would also be true for any United Methodist Church in our society, today. A few weeks ago in a sermon I asked a pointed question: do the people of Commerce, and its surrounding areas, know that FUMCC is a welcoming place for all? Is the church known as a safe place, a welcoming place, a place of grace and peace, for everyone, without regard for racial, ethnic, economic, social, marital, educational, or any other kind of status-distinction? Are all people welcome to come and be a part of our family of faith as we share the Good News of God's love for all? If we are not known for this – if the church is not looked upon by those across Commerce and the surrounding areas as a place where God's grace abounds – then why is that? And, more importantly, what can we do, as a congregation, to make it known that the call of the Gospel compels us to welcome all? Commerce's First United Methodist Church has a marvelous message to offer and a glorious God to proclaim; we have amazing grace to share. But, if those outside our church don't know that they will be as warmly received, as I was when I arrived, is it any wonder that they don't come?

My prayer for us in 2015 is that we will be about making it clear, through word and deed, that we are open, that we welcome all to come, hear the gospel, partake of God's grace, receive God's incredible love, and become a part of God's wonderful family. Let's make 2015 a Year of God's Welcoming Grace.

Texas A&M University-
Commerce
Music Department
Organ Recital



Sunday, December 7 @ 7:30pm

The TAMUC Music Department would like to express their sincere appreciation to FUMC-Commerce for our generosity in allowing their organ students to have lessons and practice at our church.

Worship

Sunday, December 7

Sunday, December 14

Sunday, December 21

Wednesday, December 24

Christmas Eve Service

Sunday, December 28

8:45am ~ Chapel

11:00am ~ Sanctuary

Midweek Eucharist

Wednesdays

@ 5:30pm ~ Chapel



TAMUC

Department of Music

Chamber Singers

Holiday Concert

Sunday, Dec. 7 @ 5:00 p.m.

First Presbyterian Church,
(1216 Monroe Street)

Join us, bring friends, and
be enveloped in the spirit of Christmas!

Committee Chairs

Ad Council Chair:

Gene Lockhart
(903) 886-3498

Lay Leader:

John Heatherly
(903) 886-7070

SPPRC Chair:

Wes Underwood
(903) 886-1503

Trustees Chair:

Jim Brown
(903) 886-7439

Finance Chair:

Mike Roberts
(903) 886-2142

Connect Team Chair:

Melinda Reid
(903) 886-7623

Grow Team Chair:

Sabrina Green
(903) 886-1902

Serve Team Chair:

Angela Roberts
(903) 886-2142

FUMC Foundation

President:

Anne Mills
(903) 886-6792

Lay Member:

Carole Walker
(903) 886-4450

UMW President:

Mary Lou Heatherly
(903) 886-8381



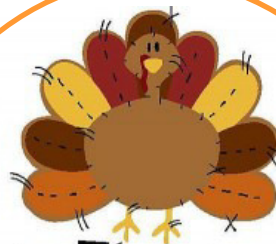
Holiday Schedule

Happy Thanksgiving!

The church office will be closed at noon Wednesday, Nov. 26 through Friday, Nov. 28 for Thanksgiving.

Merry Christmas!

The church office will be closed Wednesday, Dec. 24 through Friday, Dec. 26 for Christmas.



Happy Thanksgiving
from your
Church Staff

The First United Methodist Newsletter is the official publication of FUMC Commerce. The newsletter is published at the end of the month. Inputs may be submitted to the Church office to Bonnie Smith, Communications Specialist, at communications@fumccommerce.org, or call the office at 903-886-3220. Questions may be addressed to the Church office.

****The next deadline is Monday, December 15 by 9:00am****



Christmas Food Basket Distribution

On behalf of Hunt County Shared Ministries - FISH
Saturday, December 20

Volunteers needed to arrive at 8:30 a.m. to greet, assist with Last Saturday Breakfast hosted in the Family Ministry Center, load up carts and cars, and break down boxes.

To volunteer, contact Angela Roberts at 972. 765.6547

Jesus said, "Breakfast is ready." John 21:12 (MSG)



Last Saturday Breakfast Community Gathering

Free Breakfast

- Pancakes
- Sausage
- Fresh Fruit
- Orange Juice
- Coffee



Sponsored by
First United Methodist Church
and the Wesleyan Campus Ministry

**Saturday,
December 20, 2014
9:00-10:30 a.m.**

**at FUMC-C
Family Ministry Center**



Luigi's Italian Cafe has offered to support our community by donating 10% of dining receipts on the third Sunday of each month to our church. If you take your bulletin after church 12/21, Luigi's will staple it to your ticket. They will tally our receipts and send a check directly to our church. Help support our church by eating some good food!



December

MISSION of the MONTH

Help build a home this winter for a family in need in Juarez, Mexico, by giving to the December Mission of the Month: Proyecto Abrigo. The mission team traveling to Mexico the last week of December is raising the \$3,200 needed to cover the cost of the cinderblock house. This includes all construction materials plus pay for two professional maestros who will lead the building project. Doors and windows are also included in the cost of the home. Contact Pastor Marc Corazao for more information.

WCM Winter Mission 2014

December 28 - January 3, 2015

An incredible week of work, hospitality, service, transformation, food, and faith, building homes and meeting families on the outskirts of Juarez, Mexico!

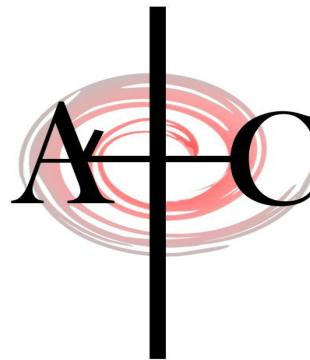


First Baptist Church's Annual Christmas Meal

Do you know someone who needs a Christmas meal? If so, contact First Baptist Church at (903) 886-3189 by Sunday, December 7th, with the names of the individuals who need boxed meals. Meals can be pick up or delivered.



Art 4 Christ



The art hanging on the walls in the Family Ministry Center is brought to you and created by the kids in the FUMC-Commerce Art for Christ afterschool

program. These kids are 3rd through 6th graders learning about 2D art. They have met every Wednesday this semester, and the art will be up through Dec 3.

Please take a moment to look at the art, and notice the way every child brings their own unique spin to each project.



UMW will meet **Tuesday, December 16** at 12:00pm for our covered dish holiday luncheon and Christmas carols. Our December project is gifts and donations to church special projects. **All women are invited to join us!**

UMW is still collecting Box Tops for Education and Labels for Education.



In memory of...

Daisy Harris Wade

By: Loretta Kibler

Wanda Robnett

By: Dragoslava Talley



Attendance

	<u>Early</u>	<u>5:30</u>	<u>Late</u>	<u>SS</u>
Oct 29		9		
Nov 2	39	—	136	85
Nov 5		12		
Nov 9	31	—	106	75
Nov 12		9		
Nov 16	33	—	151	76
Nov 19		9		
Nov 23	31	—	114	59



**Financial Information
General Operating Fund**

	<u>as of October 31, 2014</u>	<u>Year-to-Date</u>
Income:	\$ 27,603	\$317,996
Expenses:	\$ 35,614	\$323,910
	-\$ 8,011	-\$ 5,914

Reading the Bible Daily



As you seek to grow closer to God through daily prayer and Bible study, you may have your own favorite daily readings. If not, you will find Scriptures for each day listed below. We hope you'll read daily and ask yourself: "How will I be different today because of what I just read?" Some other questions you might ask are: What does this text say about who God is?" "What does this text say about who I am/who we are as human beings?" "What does this text say about our relationship with God?" You may want to reflect on paper with a journal or note pad. We hope this will become a part of your daily prayer time.

Daily Scripture Readings:

Monday, Dec 1	Mark 1:1-8
Tuesday, Dec 2	Mark 1:1-8
Wednesday, Dec 3	Isaiah 40:1-5
Thursday, Dec 4	2 Peter 3:8-15a
Friday, Dec 5	2 Peter 3:8-15a
Saturday, Dec 6	Psalm 85:1-2
Sunday, Dec 7	Psalm 85:8-13
Monday, Dec 8	Isaiah 61:1-4
Tuesday, Dec 9	Isaiah 61:8-11
Wednesday, Dec 10	Psalm 126
Thursday, Dec 11	1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
Friday, Dec 12	1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
Saturday, Dec 13	John 1:6-8
Sunday, Dec 14	John 1:19-28
Monday, Dec 15	Luke 1:38
Tuesday, Dec 16	2 Samuel 7:1-7
Wednesday, Dec 17	Luke 1:26-30
Thursday, Dec 18	Romans 16:25-27
Friday, Dec 19	2 Samuel 7:8-11, 16
Saturday, Dec 20	Luke 1:31-38
Sunday, Dec 21	Luke 1:46b-55
Monday, Dec 22	Titus 2:11-14
Tuesday, Dec 23	Luke 2:1-20
Wednesday, Dec 24	Isaiah 9:2-7
Thursday, Dec 25	John 1:1-14
Friday, Dec 26	Luke 2:22-40
Saturday, Dec 27	Isaiah 52:7-10
Sunday, Dec 28	Psalm 148
Monday, Dec 29	Jeremiah 31:7-14
Tuesday, Dec 30	Jeremiah 31:7-14
	Psalm 147:7-14
Wednesday, Dec 31	John 1:1-18



Prayer Lists

We pray for those who have experienced an illness...

Jim Hunter (Jacob Hunter's father), Irene Patterson (Linda Liston's aunt), Shirley and Charlie Ranley (at Webb Hill), Audrey Ham (Nadine and Clay Yeager's great granddaughter), Susan Rogers (Marsha Shepherd's friend), Alvin Boyd, Kenneth Davis, Harold and Priscilla McFarland, Betty Robinson, David Polk, Sally Grove, Kate Mangual, Wally Jeffers, Garrett Cramer, Derek Humphries, Betty Morton, Kay Harvey, Steve and Brenda Culberson, Pam Allgood, Ronnie Ellison, Jean Arnold, Vicky Vicker, Michelle Bone, Hugh Hanby, Rick Miller, Mitzi Oltman, Roger Arnold, Clay and Nadine Yeager, Al-len Martin, Warren Dunham, Dorothy Carlton, Wendel Underwood (Wes Underwood's father), Jean McKinney, Doris Kerbow, Norma McNew, Clyde Robnett, Jaron and Tiffany Peek (Jim Peek's son and daughter-in-law), Gene Casselberry, Sue Taylor, Lois Cranford, Robert Seay

Others to Remember in Prayer...

Christians in the Middle East

Draughn's/Country Home Estate: Ahtrell Dalton, Helen Dickson, Barbara Gish, Dorothy Ingram, Edna O'Quinn, Lucy Potts, Pete Robinson, Ruby Vander Velde, Euple Walker, and Jean Ward

Briarcliff: Sally Grove, Mary Louise McMahan, Glenna Siebenhausen

*"The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective."
James 5:16*

Help us hold each other in prayer by contacting the church office with new prayer concerns and updates on existing prayer requests.

If you have someone you would like to add or remove from the prayer list, please let the church office know (903-886-3220).



Remembering those serving in our military...

2nd Marine Division Sgt. Stephen Smith & Denise Smith
Col. Peter Bailey Garrett Johnson
Nathan Grove Lt. Col. Keith Williams
Lt. Dan Barton
Josh Ham-Nadine and Clay Yeager's grandson-in-law
Lt. Col. Jeremy Quatacker-Mark and Frances Sartwell's son-in-law
Tyler Craig (Afghanistan)-Brad and Vickie Boynton's son-in-law
Chief Robert Starkey-Wanda Beane's brother and Tom Starkey's son
Lt. JG. Terry Starkey-Wanda Beane's brother and Tom Starkey's son
Jim Hunsicker (Afghanistan)-Carolyn Miller's brother
Alex Dech (Afghanistan)-Pastor Ron Dech's son
Captain Daniel Robnett-Clyde and Wanda Robnett's grandson
Kris Yoder-John & Rebecca Sneed's son-in-law
Staff Sgt. Geoff Abbe & Sgt. Eric Abbe-Ladonna & Chris Patterson's cousins



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**MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THE
NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE**
Articles for the next newsletter are due
Monday, December 15 by 9:00am

First United Methodist Church
1709 Highway 24
Commerce, TX 75428
Senior Pastor - Dr. Gregory S. Neal