



Returning to Our Roots

Singing is a cornerstone of our United Methodist theological heritage; hymns have served as “sung theology” to educate and inspire. Charles and John Wesley wrote thousands of hymns which we still sing today. In 1761 John Wesley’s directions for singing encouraged singing with spirit, encouraging the congregation to join in, not just the choir and to sing lustily, with courage, not (as if) “half dead”. Also to sing spiritually: Aim to please God, not oneself.

Chris Turner, FirstNac UMC’s new Director of Music, is also an Assistant Professor of Voice at Stephen F. Austin State University. He grew up in church and feels he has been called to music ministry because he believes his gifts are a God given talent that are to be

shared. Music ministry has been a part of his spiritual journey throughout his life.

He spent many years in a variety of church choirs before he made the decision to go into education.

Chris wants to encourage singing robustly not only with the choir but also the congregation through



vigorous engagement and participation in the worship service. He said, “I really want to enable those who worship to be able connect with the songs. So, by giving a little insight into the music, I hope to create that connection maybe in a fresh or new way, so the words inspire. If it is something meaningful to us and we form a connection, then we are going to sing it better with more enthusiasm!”

Just as this church always does, when asked, we step up! So far there are 15 members of the choir with a few waiting in the wings. Growing the choir from our own congregation has been a dream for years. Chris’ goal is to have 20 members in the choir by late spring. Chris is very grateful to each and everyone who is giving their time and talents to make the choir the best it can be. He said, “Everyone has a real sweet spirit, everyone wants to see it thrive and grow, they understand it is an important part of our worship. If anyone is curious, talents and abilities are part of that, but what is more important is to have a willing spirit and a heart that feels called to be in the choir. Part of what we are here to do is to help train and educate people. It is about growing a person’s talents and abilities. I am here to build the sense of worship and community plus anything I can do to make FirstNac UMC thrive.”

What's Going On In March ?

SUNDAY, MARCH 1

Worship 8:45
YOUTH SUNDAY 11:05 am
Sunday School, 10 am
ICAN Sunday
Service Opportunity
Youth Service Project, 2 – 6 pm

MONDAY, MARCH 2

Service Opportunity
Heart-to-Heart Chorus Practice, Choir Rm, 9 am
Perform at Magnolia Court @ 10:00 am

TUESDAY, MARCH 3

Service Opportunity
Feed the Preschool Teachers Lunch, 11:30 am

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4

Adult Lenten Bible Study, Parlor, 6 pm
Youth Lenten Bible Study, Youth Lounge, 6 – 7 pm

THURSDAY, MARCH 5

Service Opportunity
Sew Blessed, Parlor, 10:30 am

SUNDAY, MARCH 8

Worship 8:45 & 11:05 am
Sunday School, 10 am

MARCH 9 - MARCH 13

SPRING BREAK SFA & NACISD

MONDAY, MARCH 9

Primetimers. Parlor, 9 am - Noon
Service Opportunity
GODTEL, 1902 Douglass Rd, 5 – 6 pm, prepare & serve dinner

TUESDAY, MARCH 10

Service Opportunity
HOPE Evening Food Distribution, 2100 E Main St., 5 – 7 pm

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11

Adult Lenten Bible Study, Parlor, 6 pm
Youth Lenten Bible Study, Youth Lounge, 6 – 7 pm

THURSDAY, MARCH 12

Service Opportunity
Sew Blessed, Parlor, 10:30 am
UWF Circle VI Meeting, Noon – 1 pm

SATURDAY, MARCH 14

Service Opportunity
Grounds and Building Clean Up Day, 8 am - Noon

SUNDAY, MARCH 15

Worship, 8:45 & 11:05 am
Sunday School, 10 am
The Grove Youth Group, Youth Lounge, 5 – 6:30 pm

MONDAY, MARCH 16

Heart-to-Heart Chorus Practice, Choir Rm, 9 am
Perform at Willowbrook @ 10:00 am
Board of Stewards Meeting, Parlor, 6 pm

TUESDAY, MARCH 17

Service Opportunity
Mobile Food Pantry, west parking lots, packing items starts at 2:30 pm and food distribution starts at 4 pm

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18

Service Opportunity
GODTEL, 1902 Douglass Rd, 5 – 6 pm, prepare & serve dinner
Adult Lenten Bible Study, Parlor, 6 pm
Youth Lenten Bible Study, Youth Lounge, 6 – 7 pm

THURSDAY, MARCH 19

Service Opportunity
Sew Blessed, Parlor, 10:30 am

SUNDAY, MARCH 22

Worship, 8:45 & 11:05 am
Sunday School, 10 am
Church Conference, Sanctuary, 2 pm
Confirmation Class, Youth Lounge, 3:30 – 4:30 pm
The Grove Youth Group, Youth Lounge, 5 – 6:30 pm

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25

Service Opportunity
Love INC, 917 Ruby Street, 9:30 am - Newsletter Folding
Adult Lenten Bible Study, Parlor, 6 pm
Youth Lenten Bible Study, Youth Lounge 6 pm

THURSDAY, MARCH 26

Service Opportunity
Sew Blessed, Parlor, 10:30 am

SATURDAY, MARCH 28

Movie Night on the Front Lawn – dusk

SUNDAY, MARCH 29, Palm Sunday

Worship, 8:45 & 11:05 am
Sunday School, 10 am
Confirmation Class, Youth Lounge, 3:30 – 4:30 pm
The Grove Youth Group 5 – 6:30 pm

MONDAY, MARCH 30

Ministerial Alliance Holy Week Service, TBA, Noon

TUESDAY, MARCH 31

Ministerial Alliance Holy Week Service, TBA, Noon

A FirstNac Highlight



I'm Paul Smith and I have been a Member of First Nac Since 1983. My Children were raised in this Church and it is fun to see my grandchildren attending, especially my six-year-old grandson Jacob. He can be seen most Sundays on the altar steps at the Children's Worship.

I serve in the role of Head Usher for the second time in my tenure at FirstNac. There is never a dull moment, as there are always plenty of questions to be answered and opportunities to greet current church members, as well as meet new guests. It's also fun working with the great team of greeters we have. My job requires making sure there are sufficient usher teams at both services every Sunday morning. Also, there are a number of special services throughout the year that require ushers.

We are always looking for more people (men, women and youth) to serve as ushers. If you would like to learn more about this great opportunity to serve our church, please contact me.

Serving as an Usher

The role of usher is a very important one in the church. Often, we see the ushers passing the plate during the offering and think that is pretty much all they do. On the other hand, there is a long list of services the ushers provide to each of us on any given Sunday or special event in the church. Those services include -

- *Making sure doors are open and access is clear*
- *Helping to provide security during the service*
- *Helping to greet and assist guests to their seat*
- *Securing exterior doors during services*
- *Presenting a friendly face to members and guests*
- *Collecting attendance information and offerings*
- *Providing services to those who may become ill*
- *Providing services to those who are not ambulant*
- *Serving as a source of information about the church*

Would you like to serve as an usher?

Please reach out to -

Paul Smith
936-559-3635
pmsiii@hotmail.com

Find Your Opportunity to Serve

FIRST FAMILY Claudia Whitley, Team Leader

First Family is all about caring for our church family. That includes helping host special events in the lives of our families, special events in our church, caring for each other in any way and providing personal and pastoral care as needed.

FIRST DISCIPLESHIP Jared Barnes, Team Leader

Our team coordinates meaningful learning experiences that help people of all ages grow in their faith and fellowship together. We oversee Sunday school for adults, children, and youth; small groups; and Midweek classes.

FIRST COMMUNICATION Terri Thompson, Team Leader

Communication is a tool that can couple spirituality with business practices to convey God's grace as we continue to turn our beliefs into our behavior.

FIRST COMMUNITY LeAnn Solmonson, Team Leader

First Community is about being the hands and feet of Christ in our community. We focus on serving those experiencing food insecurity, supporting students and teachers in our schools and ministering to those who experience housing instability.

FIRST OPERATIONS Steve Westbrook, Team Leader

One of our key areas in the coming year will be our church building and grounds with a goal of having a facility and surrounding grounds that are well-maintained, meet the needs of the church's ministries and are appealing to members and guests.

THE FIRST EXPERIENCE Lynn Teague, Team Leader

The First Experience teams are all about insuring every person, member and guest find a warm and friendly place to join in meaningful corporate worship.



Message From the Pastor

Our church is blessed with highly dedicated leaders. Leadership is about empowering and equipping others to be in meaningful places of ministry. Great leaders draw others alongside them who share a passion or concern for doing their work together well. They provide whatever equipping is needed so that those they have drawn in can do their work with excellence. Because leaders invite others to join them, their work accomplishes so much more than they could ever accomplish alone. Jesus did not do ministry alone. The Apostle Paul did not do ministry alone. Neither did Peter or the other disciples.

Neither did John Wesley when he organized the Methodist movement in 1700's England. We need each other as we do what God has called us to do.

March 22 is our Church Conference. Following the 11:05 worship service, Rev. Steve Woody, our District Superintendent, will lead us in a celebration of how God is working through our church. The business of the Church Conference is to receive reports, adopt a budget, and elect leaders for the rest of the year ahead. It is also, though, a recognition and celebration of how God is working through us together. All professing members of the congregation are voting members of a Church Conference. Everyone in the congregation is invited to attend. I hope you'll plan to share in that celebration of how God is working through all of us together.

Pastor Marlin

My First | My Family

When my family moved to Nacogdoches in the summer of 1962, several people from the community welcomed us to Nacogdoches and, after finding out that we were Methodists, encouraged us to visit the First Methodist Church, and I am so glad that we did! Over the years it has been my church home, with the exception of the years that the present sanctuary was under construction. Because the sanctuary was still under construction, Mike and I were married at Perritte and continued to worship there in our early marriage.

We moved our membership to First Methodist when our kids were in Elementary school. All of this is to say that First Methodist has been my church family off and on for over 60 years.

What I love about our church is the loving, caring, people in my Roundtable Sunday School Class and in the congregation who are willing to share their talents and resources in a multitude of volunteer opportunities such as helping at Love INC, Godtel, HOPE, singing in the Heart-to-Heart Chorus, making hats in the Sew Blessed knitting group, attending Prime Timers, being a writer of the "Reflections" for the Daily First Five and helping with the 6 First Forward "Opportunity to Serve Groups". I especially love seeing all of the volunteers from the community and from our church who help with the bagging and distribution of food from the East Texas Food Bank! I love the worship opportunities to serve as Ushers, Greeters, Altar Guild members, Praise Band and singers, Chancel Choir members, Acolytes, video and media staff and manning the Welcome Center table. There are so many ways to help and volunteer in our church and community and I encourage everyone to find some opportunity where they can serve! These and many more volunteer opportunities reinforce my love for the people of First United Methodist Church, Nacogdoches.

- Carolyn Hardy





Focus on the First Five

The First Five represent five essential practices that can help us on our journey to become deeply committed Christians. They certainly are not all of the essential practices but they represent keys to our growth and align with the vows we make to the church.



March Focus: Giving

If you haven't done so, now is the time to make your stewardship commitment to the church for 2026. There are many ways to give so please prayerfully consider your gift.

THE FIRST FIVE

WORSHIP: Pray five times a day and worship weekly.

STUDY: Read five verses of the Bible daily and study the Bible in a small group.

SERVE: Practice five acts of intentional kindness a week and serve with others.

GIVE: Extend five acts of generosity toward others each month and give generously to God through the church.

SHARE: Let others know you are a Christian and invite five people to church each year.

When we practice these actions, we are living out our vows to the church and our commitment to Our Purpose.

Little Pantry. Big Heart.

By KC Cope

Among the food ministries served by our church family is Buckley's Free Pantry. It's basically a small closet located in the parking lot of the Farmers Market. Anyone can leave food or take food 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. When we started our First Forward Program almost 3 years ago, I was asked to be our church's coordinator for Buckleys, because feeding the hungry has always been one of my strong passions. But why is it called "Buckley's"?

A man named Buckley MacInerney was born in McAllen, Texas in 1945. At age fifteen his family moved first to Austin for a year and then to Naples, Italy where Buckley graduated early from high school and became fluent in Italian. At age seventeen, he studied for one year at the University of Perugia in Italy. During this time in his life he visited the church in Assisi where St. Francis of Assisi is interred. St Francis is the patron Saint of animals and ecology, and Buckley's philosophy of caring for the Earth and all its flora and fauna was formed from his early connection to St. Francis.

At age eighteen, Buckley moved to Texas for more college. During his life he spent time in the Philippines, Greece, Egypt, India, Thailand, Mexico & Central America. His travels and the people he met all contributed to his philosophy that we are all connected and need to share and take care of this beautiful planet and each other.

At the age of 20, Buckley became a nuclear physicist in 1964. He then joined the newly formed Peace Corps. He was a member of the very first group of Peace Corps volunteers that was recruited and trained. Buckley was assigned to Brazil for two years, and he learned to speak Portuguese fluently. On his return, he went back to University and earned a physics degree.



In 1976 Buckley MacInerney's parents bought land in Rusk County near Nacogdoches, and he moved from California to East Texas to join them. Buckley embraced and became a part of the Nacogdoches community for the rest of his life.

Buckley was a friend to all, treated everyone equally, helped everyone, looked for the good in everyone. Many knew Buckley as the person who was involved in getting the Nacogdoches Farmer's Market up and running in 2006. He also built a little free pantry on that property for people in need. He was actively involved with the Farmers Market, The Sierra Club, Resilient Nacogdoches, Healthy Nac Coalition, and many other groups over the years. He died in 2021 at the age of 76.

I'm proud to help continue his idea of the little free pantry here in downtown. Twice a week I go there to clean off the shelves and place our church's donations there. If you don't feel like lugging your cans to the donation bin here at the church, I'm more than happy to come to your home and pick them up for you. Or give me the cash, and I'll shop for you myself. To help, reach out to KC Cope at 817-210-5776.



Donation Suggestions

Protein Sources

- Canned Beef Stew or Chili
- Beanie Weenies or Corned Beef
- Canned Beef Ravioli
- Canned Chicken Breast or Tuna
- Mixed Nuts
- Lentils, Kidney Beans, Black Beans

Fruits & Vegies

- Canned Peaches or Pears
- Canned Fruit Cocktail
- Canned Carrots or Green Peas
- Canned Diced Tomatoes

For Children

- Breakfast Cereal (large or individual)
- Pudding Snack-Packs or Fruit Cups
- Snack-Size Raisins or Dried Fruits

For People With A Kitchen

- Spaghetti Noodles & Canned Sauce
- Pre-Packaged Skillet Meals

Keep in mind that some clients may not have a kitchen to cook in. That's when the smaller individual servings of meats, meals and snacks come in handy. There is a donation cart in the west hallway of the church. If you have questions or need your items picked up, please call me. If you simply want to donate cash, I will shop for your items myself. Thank you!

Update From the Board of Stewards

The Board of Stewards gathered in the Parlor at 6:00 pm on Tuesday, February 17 for the regularly scheduled monthly meeting. The session was called to order at 6 pm by Chair Chris Hancock and after an opening prayer from Pastor Marlin and a devotional from member Rob McDermid, members heard ministry reports from Pastor Melissa and Preschool Director Jennifer McCormack. In his report, Pastor Marlin expressed deep appreciation for the extraordinary spirit of the people within the church and complimented church leadership. He also discussed the ongoing work of the Nominations Committee and the upcoming Church Conference following the late service on March 22. Included in the Chair's Report was a letter of appreciation from a church member to the board expressing gratitude to the board members for acting in the interest of the church regarding recent pastor and staff decisions. Hank Crouse reported from SPR that councils from both children and youth ministry areas have met and that searches are underway to

fill the positions of youth director and children's director and that an additional custodian is also being sought. Following an optimistic financial report from Carolyn Bowyer, the board approved the reports as well as the 2026 budget and heard an update on the upcoming stewardship campaign. Steward of Trustees Bret Arrant reported that installation of the new sanctuary heating units is imminent. The board then discussed and unanimously passed a motion to establish the designated First Forward member of the Board as the formal conduit between the Board and the leadership of First Forward. The action makes that member responsible for communicating to the Board the activities of First Forward as well as communicating to First Forward leadership any direction or requests from the Board of Stewards. The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board will be on March 16 at 6:00 pm in the Parlor. All are welcome to attend.

If you have a question or matter for the Board of Stewards, please contact:

Chris Hancock, Board Chair
936.554.0029
chris@hancockadvertising.com

You are receiving this edition of the FirstNac News, a requested printed newsletter to help us communicate better as a church. If you prefer to receive an electronic version only, please let the church office know and we will remove you from the mailing list.

First United Methodist Church
201 E Hospital Street
Nacogodches, TX 75961

The FirstNac News is published monthly by the Communications Team of First Forward.



Need to talk to a pastor?

When there is a hospitalization, a death in the family or any other time you may need urgent pastoral care, we encourage you to use these numbers.

Monday - Thursday 9:00 am to 4:00 pm: 936.564.8308

Evenings and Weekends: 936.564.8308