

CONNEXION



MISSION
"MAKING DISCIPLES OF
JESUS CHRIST
FOR THE
TRANSFORMATION OF
THE WORLD"

VISION
"A BRIGHT BEACON OF
GOD'S LOVE TO IRVING
AND BEYOND"

Volume 16 Issue 1

January 2021

So, What's the Plan for 2021?

And Jesus said, "Follow me." Matthew 4:19

First United Methodist Church
211 West Third Street
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Connexion 16 Issue 1



I wrote in January 2020: "This will be an interesting year (aren't they all!), but if we keep our focus on faithfully following Jesus and being empowered by the Spirit then we are doing what God wants us to do this year." Who would have known how "interesting" (to put it very mildly) 2020 would end up being? I was asked by our church council chair, Marni Monty, to present a vision for our church for this year. Considering the craziness of 2020, I put down these thoughts knowing that "We can make our plans, but the Lord determines our steps" (Proverbs 16:9).

A Vision for First United Methodist Church of Irving for 2021:

- 1) Stay God-focused. Bring people to God the Father, proclaim Jesus as our Savior and Lord (Jesus saves us and directs our thoughts and actions), and be Spirit-led.
- 2) Stay biblically-based. Not only do we lead the church from Scripture, but we also excite people to read the Bible for themselves as the inspired Word of God.
- 3) Reinforce who we are as Methodists. We have a message to share about God's grace working in all, God's grace leading people to saving faith in Jesus Christ, and God's grace maturing people in the faith to live, think, and act as faithful followers of Christ.
- 4) Continue to balance the need to gather as a church, whether in worship or smaller groups, with the commitment to protecting ourselves and others from the pandemic. We cannot predict what will happen with COVID-19 in 2021, but we will continue to follow safe guidelines while finding ways to minister to the congregation. Our on-line worship, outdoor worship, and socially distanced in-person worship will continue.
- 5) Reach out to our neighbors as a beacon of God's light to Irving and beyond. We will share the hope of Jesus Christ by being intentional about inviting others to join us whether in-person or on-line. We will show the love of Jesus Christ through our sack lunch ministry, Family Promise, Many Helping Hands, and other ministries to those in need. We will also impact the world for Christ through our partnership with missions in places like Okinawa and Guatemala. I hope we will have the opportunity for a mission trip to Guatemala in 2021, but this is still yet to be decided due to the pandemic.
- 6) Be a people of prayer! We are called to pray for each other, pray for our church and church leaders, and pray for our denomination. We are called to pray intentionally for those who need to accept Jesus as their savior. We are called to listen intentionally to God's still small voice as God speaks to us in our prayers.

As we sing:

*Where He leads me I will follow. Where He leads me I will follow.
Where He leads me I will follow. I'll go with Him, with Him all the way.*

Blessings!

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Doug".



2021 Bible Reading Challenge!

This year we will be reading through key parts of the Bible from the Old Testament through the New Testament. The major themes of Scripture will be encountered as you read God's inspired word. The Sunday message will almost always be taken from the week's readings.

Week (Theme)	Reading
Jan 4 – 10 (Inspired Scripture)	2 Timothy 3:16-17 2 Kings 22; Psalm 119 Nehemiah 8
Jan 11 -17 (Creation)	Genesis 1-2, John 1 Job 38-39; Psalm 104
Jan 18-24 (Sin)	Genesis 3, 6-8 1 John 1, Psalm 51
Jan 25-31 (Covenant)	Genesis 12-13, 15, 17 John 15; Psalm 40
Feb 1-7 (God is Near)	Genesis 25, 27-28, 32-33; Psalm 4
Feb 8-14 (God is working)	Genesis 37, 39-45, 50
Feb 15-21 (Called)	Exodus 1-4; Isaiah 6 Luke 5; Acts 9
Feb 22-28 (God Delivers)	Exodus 5-7, 12-14, 15
Mar 1-7 (God Provides)	Exodus 16-17 Deuteronomy 8 John 6; Psalm 23

A Celebration of 2020!
from our Finance Chair

Thanks be to God for the faithfulness of the members and friends of FUMC – Irving. Despite the difficulties from the pandemic, we were able to fully fund our 2020 expenses. From our operating budget:

Income: \$740,955.02
Expenses: \$735,614.26
Surplus: \$5,340.76

We also completed a low-key, yet very successful Stewardship Campaign for 2021.

We had the same number of pledges as in 2020 with a \$20,098 increase in amount pledged towards our operating budget.

I look forward to continuing in ministry with such a great congregation!

John Schilling



Hello 2021.

Some people are saying 2020 was the worst year ever, but I must say it started off great for me because I got to come to FUMC Irving as Children's Director. It started off as a normal transition in person but changed rapidly as we all made transitions into the virtual world of ZOOM. My computer skills are still being challenged but I enjoy seeing some of our children weekly. In December after the party for older children I went around and delivered Christmas goodie bags. I was able to safely see some more of our children and church family. Our next gathering will be for Valentine's Day. We will have another service project to go along with that party. I was assured the residents of Avante enjoyed their cards, ornaments, and snowflakes.

I am starting the new year with a verse to claim for now. *ESV Isaiah 35:3-4a Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who have an anxious heart, "Be strong; fear not!"* there are many more verses to affirm the soul, but this is helping me now. This last year fortified my prayer life, we read through the New Testament and I am sure the Pastor's new reading challenge will build up the family of God. Let us remember to build up the family through daily prayer.

Blessings,
Juanell Montoya

Refuge Youth

Hi everyone,

I hope 2021 is starting off well for you. Our youth are back to meeting in person and online on Wednesday nights. We're having great conversations about God and how we might represent Christ in the world in this new year. We're really looking forward to our camp out over spring break and are so thankful for your continued prayers and support.

Rev. Kyle Powell
Associate Minister and Director of Youth Ministries

MEMORIALS AND HONORARIUMS

DECEMBER 2020 & JANUARY 2021

In Honor of

Ron & Maryla Zimmerman, Jimmy & Tami Lane, Jimmy & Deborah Bellew, Bill & Marni Monty to General Budget from Judy Elms
Frank & Mildred Sinclair's memory to the Sack Lunch Program from Judy Baggett
Frank & Mildred Sinclair's memory to the Sack Lunch Program from David Sinclair
Staff & Volunteers to General Budget from Cynthia Stone
Staff & Volunteers for keeping the church doors open in 2020 to General Budget from Danny & Judy Elms
Loyd Hinch to Music Ministry from Debby Werle
Zoom friends to General Budget from Anna Wilkins
Jim & Boosh Brown's memory to General Budget from loving family

In Memory of MaryLou Niethamer

to A/C Fund from Norma & Alissa Mabry
to Music Ministry from Cheryl Jennings
to Music Ministry from Mike & Kathy Minturn
to General Budget from Anna Wilkins
to General Budget from Burbank High School Faculty of Burbank, CA

In Memory of Anne Uhr

to A/C Fund from Norma & Alissa Mabry

In Memory of Theresa Bowers

to A/C Fund from Norma & Alissa Mabry
to General Budget from Anna Wilkins
to Youth Ministry from Mike & Kathy Minturn

In Memory of Bettye Jennings

to A/C Fund from Norma & Alissa Mabry

In Memory Dorothy Chandler

to A/C Fund from Harrold & Ruth Henson
to A/C Fund from Connie Baker
to General Budget from Cynthia Stone

In Memory Ann Cox

to General Budget from Tim & Joan Strutz

In Memory of Lecil Moore

to A/C Fund from Ruth & Harrold Henson
to A/C Fund from Jan Mayo
to A/C Fund from Joe & Bobbie Smith
to A/C Fund from Connie Baker
to A/C Fund from Ron & Maryla Zimmerman
to General Budget from Bob & Jody Dodson
to General Budget from Dr. Francis Gilbert
to General Budget from Jennifer A. Moore
to General Budget from Margaret Preston
to General Budget from Linda Reeder
to General Budget from A.R. Weatherly
to General Budget from David & Sandy Brady
to General Budget from John & Linda Wolfe
to General Budget from Lewis & Nita Patrick

In Memory of Lecil Moore

to General Budget from Sammy Hargrove
to General Budget from Helen Feldman
to General Budget from Cynthia Stone
to General Budget from Cheryl Jennings

In Memory of:

Reba Wheeler, Mickey Wheeler's mother, to A/C Fund from Ralph & Sue Wilson
Reba Wheeler to Missions from Challengers Sunday School Class
Reba Wheeler to General Budget from Dick & Jeanell Bischofhausen
Arthur Jo White to Music Ministry from Mary Good
Peter Comstedt to Music Ministry from Mary Good
Mac & Jackie Spruce to General Budget from Bill & Janet Spruce
Opal Connelly to Music Ministry from Paul & Mary Good
Nelsba Baker to Music Ministry from Paul & Mary Good
Brantla Prentice to Music Ministry from Paul & Mary Good
Thomas Elms, brother of Danny Elms to A/C Fund from Mickey & Linda Wheeler



Parent's Day Out



We have had such fun this January at PDO!! Normally this month is bleak and gray weather, and a let down from the holidays, hard to get back into normal schedule, etc. Not at PDO! We have had "pretend" snow days, Frozen Day, got to wear our pajamas to school and have hot chocolate - all while working on our studies! One of the kids made a profound statement that put a positive outlook on winter and ice. She said "You gotta have snow and ice to get to have something to melt." Hmmm... yes so we do. So January can be just as fun as we make it with that kind of POSITIVE!! Never a day goes by that we adults can't learn from a child.

Happy January to all!

Ms. Sandi and PDO